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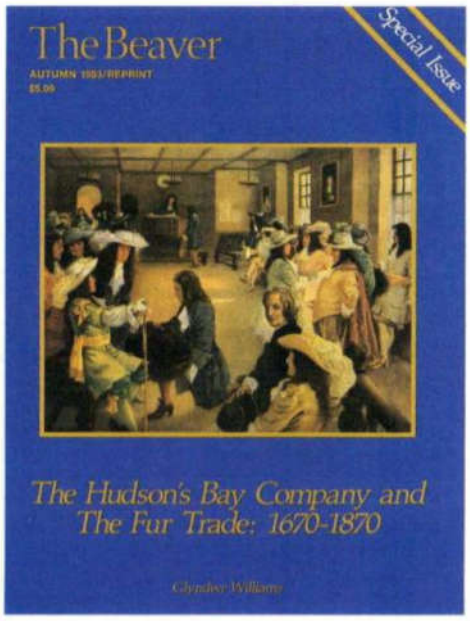

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By GLYNDWR WILLIAMS

86 pages. Illustrated

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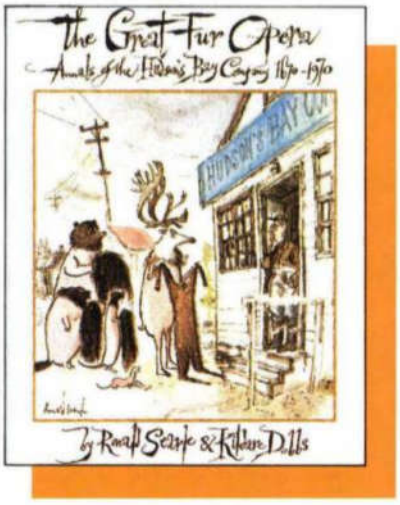

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Editor:
Christopher Dafoe
Managing Editor:
Carol Preston

Cover:
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Joseph Brant
By William Berczy.
National Gallery of
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Advisory Board:
Shirlee A. Smith
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The Beaver

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FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Through Colonial Canada With Our Pioneer Tourists

By Wallace Brown

Since the "discovery", travellers to America have been feeding a hungry old world with descriptions of the brave new world. The market has attracted everyone from the obscure to the famous, from Anon to Charles Dickens; has produced everything from trivialities to masterpieces, from tourist puffs to Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*. The area which is now Canada has inspired nothing to match the profundities of the wistful Frenchman, but the well over thirty accounts cited in this article by travellers who were in British North America, usually during the period between 1783 and the War of 1812, are fascinating historical sources, in a few cases perfect gems.

Travel accounts are prone to disadvantages, wittily and timelessly described by Lieutenant Francis Hall, who visited Canada and the United States in 1816-1817. Their authors, undeterred, according to Hall, by "mere want of information", rarely shrank from the "bold enterprize" of describing "the habits, manners, and disposition of a nation, after a fifteen days' journey through it", and "a glimpse . . . through the windows of their travelling carriage" inspired pseudo-profundities; travellers naturally were often pre-occupied with their own comfort or lack of it, which in turn coloured their perceptions; there was a tendency to repetition through the perusal of earlier writers "by whose means their followers are enabled to transmit a lie, unpolluted, to posterity".

Travellers' history is elite history. Although plebians sometimes travelled as servants, they seldom recorded their impressions. However, they and other members of the so-called "inarticulate", such as Indians and blacks, do appear, albeit through elitest eyes.

There are always disappointments. Joseph Hadfield, an Englishman who journeyed in 1785, tantalizes us with the observation that he "made it a point to call upon every family" of Loyalists in Dundas county and elicit "truths which the pages of history seldom possess". Unfortunately those "truths" were not vouchsafed in his diary. Typically, travellers give more space to fishing, the weather, insects, rattlesnakes or Niagara Falls than to the Loyalists. They have eyes for exotica and tend to ignore what is for them (but not for us) routine. If only we could have issued them with questionnaires!

The weaknesses of travel accounts are outweighed by their strengths, above all the shock of the unfamiliar — "everything was new to me", a freshness enhanced by contrast — "there are no two countries more thoroughly different".

The anecdotal, impressionistic nature of travel writing, often considered a weakness, can be a strength. The lively vignette, a sort of historical snapshot, abounds, frozen in time. Thus Patrick Campbell, who visited in 1791-92 with an eye to the immigration of fellow Highlanders, witnessed a farmer calling his sheep on the banks of the St. John River. "Canaan! Canaan! and presently a parcel of sheep came skipping out" surrounding and fawning on their master. "As I imagined it was Queen Anne he called I looked very attentively among the flock to see if I could discern the one he honoured with the royal title; and when I could not see any one seemingly superior to the rest, I asked him which one of them he called Queen Anne. At which he laughed immoderately, and told me, that I was led into the mistake by his manner of pronouncing the word Canaan; which is universally used in this country when they call their Sheep". (At least as recently as 1937 the call was still used in New Brunswick.)

The following is perhaps more an eighteenth century one-liner than a snapshot. Robert Hunter Jr., a young merchant who, accompanied by his friend, Joseph Hadfield, visited during the years 1785-6, was sailing near Carleton Island in Upper Canada: "About seven o'clock we spoke a schooner. 'Who commands it?' said I. 'Me', answers the captain: I could not help smiling at his reply".

Travel accounts provide gobbets of odd but interesting information. For example: "To-morrow is Christmas; and the children are saying, 'oh, mamma, what do you think the fairy will put into our stockings?' Queen Mab is a Dutch fairy that I never was intro-

> *"Despise not, gentle reader, first impressions, especially in a traveller. I am convinced . . . that if a sharp, well-defined outline is to be drawn, it can be done immediately after arrival in a place; when the sense of contrast is still fresh upon the mind, and before second and third have ousted first thoughts. . . ."*
>
> *— Sir Richard Burton*

Loyalists on the journey to Upper Canada, by C.W. Jefferys.

duced to in England or Scotland, but she is a great favourite of the little folks in this and the other Province [Nova Scotia and New Brunswick], and if they hang up a stocking on Christmas Eve, she always pops something good or pretty into it, unless they are very naughty, and then she puts in a birch rod to whip them."

The reasons for travel mainly involved commerce, emigration, religion, government, the army and pleasure — sometimes, a mixture of all. The routes were generally two great waterways, plus the necessary portages: the St. John, the St. Lawrence and west through the Great Lakes; the Hudson-Mohawk and Lake Champlain entry from the United States. The modes, which elicited much comment, were canoes, bateaux, schooners, horses, sleighs, carriages, and shanks pony, sometimes on snow shoes. Guides and boatmen were often employed.

Dangers, inconveniences and a pervading haphazardness dwarfed modern travel problems. Thus John Grew, at Cornwall in 1803 en route to Montreal, decided to chance "a very bad road" rather than a "Batteau" whose crew had "no Sails and intended to Borrow a Blanket and Sheet for a substitute". On the other hand there was scope for improvisation unknown today. At the end of April 1809 Lady Hunter was amazed to find her army officer husband, Sir Martin, returned home to Fredericton from Saint John despite the fact that broken ice and floating timber decreed river travel, the only feasible way, as "totally impossible". However, he did it "on foot, on the ice, on horseback, in log canoes, and birch canoes with Indians".

Travel, if much slower and more varied than today, was remarkably efficacious. Water (fluid or frozen) transportation was the most convenient. A vast assortment of craft, from official naval ships to humble freelance punts, crowded Canadian waters. A Loyalist would be amazed at today's dearth of vessels on the Bay of Fundy or the River St. John.

Halifax to Shelburne, Nova Scotia, was an easy two day cruise. Annapolis to Saint John might take four and a half hours across the bay. Saint John to Fredericton, up river by schooner, took three or four days. Montreal to Kingston by bateau, though slowed by rapids, could be done in ten days (the return journey took two); Kingston to Niagara across Lake Ontario was faster — from two to four days, depending on the wind, but there was the drawback of lake-sickness which one traveller claimed was worse than sea-sickness. Speed by water depended on such things as type of craft, weather, currents, rapids and falls. On the St. Lawrence west of Montreal a boat averaged eighteen miles a day against the current, ninety miles with it. Paddled by a guide in a canoe Colonel Joseph Gubbins, who was inspecting the New Brunswick militia, achieved three miles per hour against the stream west of Fredericton. On the return, down a flooded St. John, he completed seventy miles in under nine hours, a speed of about eight miles per hour.

Winter freeze transformed many boat routes into sleigh routes. Thus the St. John remained New Brunswick's great "post-road", marred only by a tendency of both horses and persons to fall through thin ice, a familiar hazard wherever the Loyalists settled. Horse-drawn sleighs could easily cover sixty miles and occasionally ninety miles in a day. There is one mention of "baggage . . . drawn by large Newfoundland dogs", but no indication of speed. Spring thaw brought a travel hiatus, a transition period between ice and water.

Land travel was difficult. Without a guide, even with a compass, it was easy to get lost. Roads were rare and crude by British standards, bridges more so. Lord Selkirk, who promoted colonization in 1804-05, wrote that in Prince Edward Island the roads were "mere bridle paths", the bridges only rotting "spruce logs . . . laid crossways to the road". Lieutenant William Dyott, en route between Halifax and Windsor, Nova Scotia, typically pronounced "The middle stage, the very worst road I ever saw". In the west John Grew asked the locals why there were no bridges, "which would cost but a few dollars", over the many creeks that crossed the road between Kingston and Montreal. The answer was partly poverty, but more importantly most travellers went by water in summer, and in winter "all being covered with snow and ice, it is but of little consequence whether the roads are good or bad".

Complaints were legion about mud, stumps, tangled roots, swamps and creeks, which too often never dried up because dense foliage barred the sun. All agreed that it was much easier travelling in winter in the woods because "the sleighs glide over all obstacles". As late as 1804 Lady Hunter observed with amusement that as Colonel Gubbins, newly arrived in Fredericton, would not be able to drive the carriages he had brought "for more than fifty yards in any direction" he would have to attach runners for winter use.

As on water and snow, speed by horse (and occasionally horse and carriage) varied according to conditions. Except on a rare decent road progress seems to have been at no more than three or four miles per hour, or around thirty miles a day. On 19 November 1791 Lieutenant John Clarkson, recruiting blacks to settle in Sierra Leone, left Halifax for Windsor and rode thirteen miles in the late afternoon on an "extremely good" road. Next day he rose at daybreak and proceeded nine miles along an "intolerably bad" road before taking breakfast. He resumed his journey at eleven and reached Windsor at sunset, a day's trip of some twenty-seven miles, a total trip of some forty miles. In one day of May 1805 Lady Hunter and her party covered thirty-one miles in carriages along the

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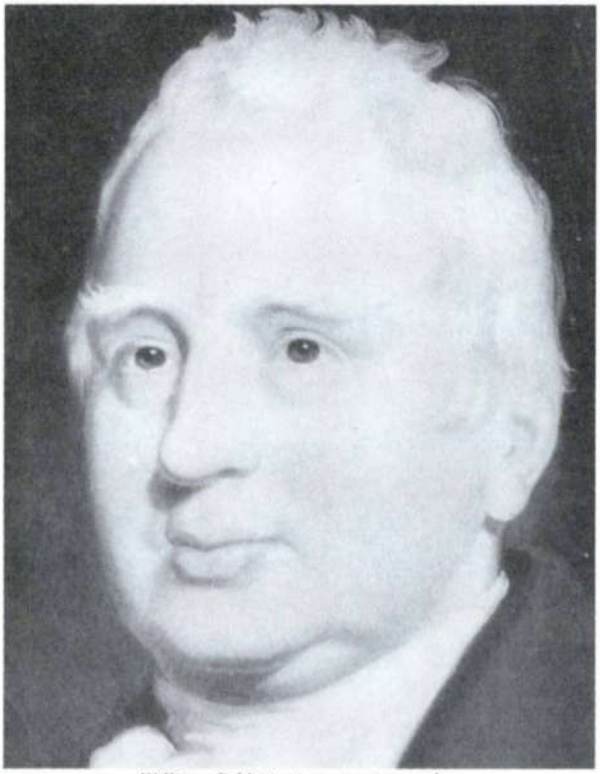
York on Lake Ontario, Upper Canada, 1804, by Elizabeth Francis Hale.

same route. She commented: "This must appear to Europeans a very short day's journey, but over Nova Scotia's roads it is equal to travelling a hundred and fifty in England. We were almost shook to pieces. . . ". In 1813, between Cumberland and Shediac, New Brunswick, Gubbins took as long as eight hours to ride seventeen miles "tho' on a vigorous horse" because of an "extremely bad" track "through a forest". It was common for travellers to be forced by the terrain to dismount and walk.

True to their species the visitors wrote constantly about the daily weather. They were also inclined to judge the Canadian climate in general. Naturally they found it more extreme than Britain's. Opinion of the consequences varied. Sargeant-Major William Cobbett, on duty in N.B., wrote "horrible", Colonel Gubbins wrote "salubrious", the Duc de la Rochefoucauld Liancourt, the sophisticated French tourist, wrote "very healthy". All agreed that the short growing season need not hinder agriculture. Rochefoucauld added that in the Kingston, Ontario, area there was no danger of hay and grain rotting as in Europe because of abundant sunshine. With several dark allusions to "lake fever" (malaria) in "the Canadian Siberia" (Upper Canada) the favourable verdict on the climate applied most to the Maritimes. Gubbins claimed New Brunswick doctors were unemployed, and Grand Manan, with no natural death in twenty years, was a veritable Shangri La.

At least one traveller blamed the overuse of "spirituous liquors" on the cold winters, but for all winter was the preferred season, not just because of improved transportation. With frost and snow "pleasure commences her reign" in the form of social visits, parties and dances. The winter "Fairyland" was unknown at home. Even for a casual visit Mrs. Gubbins delighted to make a twenty mile sleigh ride, despite "the glass below zero", so indescribably beautiful were "the roads and the prospect of everything". Cobbett revelled in the clear, cold but sunny days, the "snow, dry as hair-powder screeching under our feet", later the fantastic, shrieking, river ice-jams which heralded the spring thaw. Above all winter brought respite from the heat of summer and Canada's great curse, "plaguy insects", particularly mosquitoes and black flies, which were unknown at home. The only prophylactic was smoke. Complaints which might be expected about temperatures "65 degrees below the freezing point" are not found because of the abiding paradox of British versus North American winters: dry cold, house construction and, more importantly, an abundance of firewood made the mild former more uncomfortable than the harsh latter. Lady Hunter remarked that "the intense cold has taught the people here to keep their houses much



William Cobbett: A martyr to weather.

more comfortable than you do in England". There was the danger, remote for most travellers, of being frozen to death, lost in the wilds, but normally they moved in style, well-protected by bear skins and muffs.

Accommodation could be a problem. Although conditions were probably somewhat better in the more sophisticated Maritimes than in Upper Canada, inns were generally scarce and varied greatly in quality. John Grew proclaimed the inn at Niagara as "excellent", up to old country standards, but more usual was an inn on the road east of Kingston that supplied "nothing but Bread, Salt Meat, Water and a resting place". He could not even get a drink because the paucity of travellers could not justify the 4 pounds for a liquor license. Later, at Elizabeth Town, Grew had an argument about clean sheets, a probably not uncommon altercation. "The Good Lady of the House", who indignantly insisted, despite "occular demonstration", that the linen was not "unclean", revealed a culture-gap when she explained that "a few Weeks" use "by her own family and some travellers whom chance had brought that way" had "hardly" made them "dirty enough to be washed".

Lady Hunter complained of an inn in the Annapolis Valley that her party "ate and slept in the same room", and "the wretched accommodation cost more than luxury apartments" in London. Her repeated complaints about the food are hard to take seriously: no fresh meat — "eggs, bacon, cheese, butter, milk, and brown bread is all you expect. The beverage, the cider of the Province, gin, rum, and brandy". Later she mentioned "eating an American meal of ham and eggs and fresh-caught trout, served with tea and cake".

As late as 1820, George Head, a Briton interested in Irish immigration, found his hotel in Saint John rough, his fellow guests equally so. "One or two chewed tobacco, all spit on the carpet", and a lieutenant-colonel of militia ate with his knife, a procedure that threatened to enlarge his already wide mouth "up to his ear". In fact, British discontent with accommodations, unthinkable today, lasted well into the twentieth century.

As always in rural societies, lack of amenities combined with a thirst for news made private hospitality a way of life: "the man that would have closed his door against a traveller would have been looked upon as worse than a savage". Robert Hunter wrote in Upper Canada: "We make perfectly free in every house we stop at. They are all glad to see you to learn the news from the old country."

Like inns, private houses varied greatly. In central Nova Scotia Lieutenant Dyott's party stayed in barns "where the men and their ladies pigged together". Patrick Campbell spent one night in the New Brunswick woods between Sussex and Saint John in "a miserable little hovel, covered with bark, and so low I could not stand upright in it. I slept on the floor, and was much troubled by Mosquitoes". Of General Hunter's party on the Miramichi his wife reported: "They slept on the floor of the hovels they went into for shelter at night, and describe the fleas and bugs in these places to have been of a size and number beyond anything they ever met with."

On the other hand Colonel Gubbins' militia tour of 1811 included many comfortable overnight stops: "hospitably received by Captain Scott . . . who has a pleasant farm upon the River Petiticodiac", and, "I arrived at Mr. Eligood's [Jacob Ellegood, a wealthy Virginian Loyalist] . . . where I met with a hospitable reception", were typical comments.

Whatever the quality of Loyalist hospitality, most visitors praised its generosity. Robert Hunter's hosts were affronted when he tried to pay for milk. On the Long Sault rapids his party descended on a Loyalist's house and "made quite free in dressing our victuals by their fire and dining in their room. They were very obliging in furnishing us with a clean table cloth. Upon my word, I never met with more civil people in my life".

In October 1791 Lieutenant Clarkson stopped at Point L'Hébert en route by ship to Shelburne. He found "a few wretched inhabitants" in the "uncommonly wild" wooded area eking out "a scanty subsistence"

Royal Ontario Museum

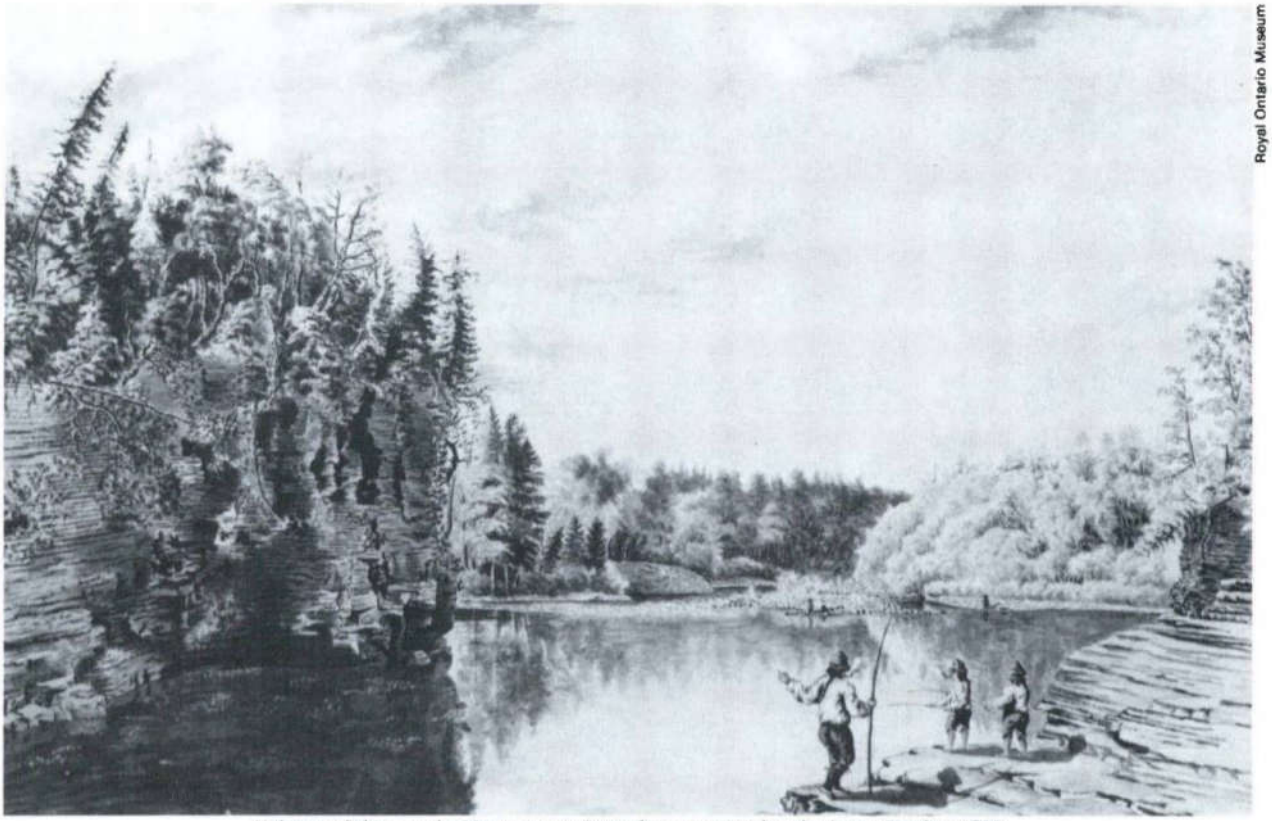
South View of Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1797, watercolour, pen and ink over pencil by George W. Roskruge.

from a few rocky acres planted with potatoes and corn. The wealthiest had "a few Sheep or a Cow". At one of the huts Clarkson and his party "met with a most agreeable reception" from Jenny Lavender, a young girl of fifteen, left in charge of two younger brothers while her parents gathered potatoes across the river. With manners that "would have done Credit to a Person of the first rank and Education" Jenny "made a hearty supper" from "potatoes and buttermilk, with a few dried salt fish". Forced by the weather to stay over, the party was made comfortable as Jenny kept the fire going throughout the night. Clarkson departed next day, "pained to think that so valuable a Mind should be entomb'd in this Wilderness and for ever secluded from the social comforts of Mankind in a state of Society".

A few travellers witnessed the arrival of the Loyalists in the early days of their settlement. Samuel Kelly, a common seaman who took part in the October 1783 evacuation of New York, kept a little-known journal. He observed the civilian Loyalists quarrelling with the ex-soldiers who stole their goods. Also the Loyalists in general fell out with the crew when one or two large, vicious dogs belonging to the refugees "were wantonly thrown overboard". Kelly recorded glimpses of the scene at the mouth of the St. John River. There were many "wigwams, framed and log houses", which looked nice from the sea, but proved chaotic on closer inspection. He complained of the hazard of tree stumps, a complaint echoed by visitors to Canada for many years to come. With winter fast approaching the Loyalists were anxious to get ashore. Kelly helped land "an old pair with two daughters" whom he left on top of a cliff with their furniture drawn in a circle around them as protection from the wind. Snow fell and his departing ship had aboard a widow and her daughter who, "alarmed at the dreary appearance of the country", decided not to stay.

In the summer of 1785 Robert Hunter and Joseph Hadfield travelled west of Montreal as far as Niagara on private business. The pair fell in with many Loyalists along the way, sometimes buying milk from them, sometimes socializing. They had an eye for the many pretty daughters who, they said, augured well for the peopling of the new lands. The Loyalists' very arrival excited Hadfield's admiration. "To see large families with their cattle, furniture and effects, complete these tedious voyages is a matter of wonder . . . ". Hunter was impressed by the refugees' pioneer skills. Often trees had to be felled before a tent could even be pitched, but a large tree came down in thirteen minutes, an acre was cleared in two days. Within six weeks of their arrival many Loyalists were living in cabins which, once suitable wood was cut, could be put up in three days.

Hunter visited one such simple one-room cabin which



Royal Ontario Museum

Habitants fishing on the Montmorency River, from a watercolour by James Peachey, 1780.

contained two small beds for eight people. The same year at Elizabethtown Lieutenant John Enys encountered six adult Loyalists in a similar cabin measuring fourteen by fourteen feet. These abodes were derisively named "King's Chateaux" by the French Canadians, but as Hunter said, "such must be the beginnings in all settlements", and, after all, rooms were added, "when they find the time".

Hunter believed that despite primitive conditions, the Loyalists were mostly "jovial", adding "I have seen few who are not contented". An exception was a Mrs. French, from Rhode Island, who complained that "she had been obliged to leave one of the sweetest countries in the world, and many of her relations to come and live in Canada, which she thinks a miserable place, comparatively speaking".

There is a chorus of agreement with Hunter's testimony to the Loyalists' skill with the axe and numerous descriptions of land-clearing (felling, girdling, burning), an unfamiliar process in Britain since medieval times. The vast virgin forests were a novel sight about which most visitors waxed ecstatic — and continued to do so. In 1787 the Reverend Andrew Brown, a visiting Presbyterian Scot, wrote of Nova Scotia. "When you survey the Wilderness from an eminence, you behold as far as Vision blinds, a boundless expanse of living and moving Surface Diversified in all Colouring yet singular in its appearance, it is not land, it is not water, but the peculiar perspective of America which no Description can give an adequate idea".

Particularly awe-inspiring were the massive white pines (potentially masts for the Royal Navy) which could be four or five feet in diameter at the base, reach eighty feet before the first branch, and soar to 175 feet. Andrew Brown wrote that the white pines presented "a singular appearance; that, namely, of a thin wood of shafts without a bend, which it pains the eye to follow to the summit, surmounted only with a steadier coronet of green, bearing a strong resemblance of Hogarth's picture of Wilkes' tall liberty pole covered with its ancient cowl".

Admiration for Canada's natural beauty beyond the forest was equally widespread. One "noble" or "pleasing" or "magnificent" prospect succeeded another. The spectacular tides of the Bay of Fundy attracted interest; to the west the Thousand Isles reaped special praise ("Mille Isles surpasses anything of the kind I have seen", exulted Robert Hunter), but above all was Niagara Falls, already a major tourist attraction. The travellers assiduously, sometimes riskily, viewed "per-

haps the greatest natural curiosity in the world", which George Heriot, the deputy postmaster of British North America, pronounced surpassed "in sublimity every description which the powers of language can afford". Nevertheless, he and others tried in numerous, lengthy, prose passages. (They also left a much more valuable collection of maps, sketches and paintings.) Reactions to the Falls ranged from the religious — "Oh! bring the aetheist here, and he cannot return an aetheist!" — to the anecdotal — Colonel Thomas Dundas, the Loyalists' Claims Commissioner, met an old lady who had lived for four years within two hundred yards and never seen them.

The Falls and trackless forest were dangerous, but Nature was as great a friend as enemy, a great provider for all classes in a way impossible in the Britain of the poaching laws. Many travellers mentioned the profusion of wild fruit. Virtually all commented on the incredibly plentiful supplies of fish in the sea, the estuaries, the rivers, the lakes. On the upper St. Lawrence, Robert Hunter feasted on bass (the "finest fish I have tasted in America"); even the wretchedly poor in New Brunswick had trout and salmon "in abundance"; at Halifax there were "such astounding quantities of haddock" that the inhabitants "will scarce eat skate". Another widespread surprise was the abundant game: deer, caribou, hares and rabbits, plus flocks of birds, particularly pigeons, ducks and geese. The exotic evoked comment: "curious butterflies", lynx, wild cats, wolverine, bears, rattlesnakes, and above all moose, "a very curious animal . . . between a horse and a cow" with "immense ears".

Patrick Campbell described moose hunting in New Brunswick. First the moose call with a birch bark funnel. If that failed the huntsman "blows in the water and makes it bubble up, so as to resemble the water bubbling by the breath of an animal feeding in it; then putting his finger in the small end of the funnel, he dips it in the water and raises the full of it, then removing his finger, he pours it back again in a small stream; thus making the noise as if a Cow Moose was pissing. When the bull hears this, he runs with such fury and force" that the hunter is in danger of being run down, but with luck "he fires and kills him on the spot".

Moose hunting was of more than a passing interest to the Loyalists. Colonel Dundas noted that in New Brunswick the hardship of the winter of 1786-87, caused by the ending of government supplies and the insufficiency of local crops, was increased early in the season because of poor hunting conditions — "the snow" should be "in a state to bear a dog, and not the sharp hoof of a moose". (Travellers agreed that winter was best for hunting large game animals because the snow slowed them down. Another advantage was winter's free deep freeze, a welcome addition to salting and smoking for the preservation of flesh.)

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Elizabeth Simcoe. Hemlock tea fails to please.

Dundas added that the meat of one moose could "support a large family for weeks". In March 1789 Captain William Booth of the Royal Engineers recounted that moose meat, cheap and plentiful at the Shelburne market, was "a great help to the poorer sort of the Inhabitants". Booth found moose steak, though lacking in fat, was "as tender . . . as ever I would wish to eat", adding that moose "makes excellent soup". Booth's praise was unusual. "Very little better than carrion", said Lieutenant Dyott, who also found caribou "very poor eating". For Captain William Moorsom, an officer in Nova Scotia, moose hunting was "a fascinating sport", but the resulting meat "though by some compared to venison, would not stand competition with the poorest/British/haunch . . ., being both dry, devoid of fat, and insipid". Moose nose, known as muffle, was a delicacy in the Maritimes, and still was as late as 1937. The forest provided many treats for the enterprising gourmet including maple sugar (generally admired), beaver tail (for many "a delicious morsel", but too much gristle for Patrick Campbell), roasted porcupine ("very good", declared Lady Hunter), squirrel ("a dish which prejudice alone could induce one to reject"), bear meat (disliked by Mrs. Simcoe as too similar to pork), rattlesnake soup

(praised by Isaac Weld), and hemlock tea ("not pleasant", snapped Mrs. Simcoe).

There are indications that, like the trees of the forest, animal life was soon affected by the careless depredations of the pioneers. In 1811 Gubbins noted that moose, deer and caribou were scarce in New Brunswick being "driven . . . into the interior". As early as 1791 Patrick Campbell quoted the opinion of a settler between Sussex and Saint John that the caribou and moose were "totally banished"; the same year on the Nashwaak River Campbell was told that the salmon "are turning fewer, as the settlements increase; and that the people destroy most of them in the spawning time, as there is no attention paid to prevent it in this province".

Apart from wood for fuel, and for building everything from benches to brigantines, the gifts of the forest were merely adjuncts to the main business of farming, success in which rapidly became pressing for many Loyalists as the three year limit on government supplies ran out. Near Johnstown in 1785 Joseph Hadfield met a poor veteran of Butler's Rangers who had a two hundred acre grant, but could not afford any cattle, and, because he had no horse to harrow, would lose his wheat crop. Hadfield wrote, "it is evident that without rations allowed by Government many of the people must perish". As late as September 1810 in New Brunswick Lady Hunter witnessed hardship on the Miramichi River: "salted salmon and potatoes is the only food of the inhabitants; no bread anywhere, their last year's corn had long been done, and this year's they had not yet began".

But generally travellers reported quick and continuing agricultural progress, with the exception of British half-pay officers and their wives who lived above their incomes and were loathe to roughen their hands or muddy their boots. As early as the summer of 1785 Robert Hunter saw "abundance of wheat, Indian corn, and potatoes wherever you go" along the St. Lawrence. Near Johnstown (Cornwall) he "walked over some fine cultivated ground where a Loyalist lives who has neither plow, harrow or cattle, it is astonishing to see to what perfection he has brought his land . . . . He must have worked like a Negro". The same year Lieutenant Enys prophesied that progress at Oswegatchie was so great the farmers would soon be able to undersell the French at Montreal one hundred and twenty miles away.

In 1786 Colonel Dundas visited Horton, Nova Scotia, where "scum . . . from Connecticut" had replaced the deported Acadians. The New Englanders had failed to improve the land, but "the Loyal refugees lately come among them have done much good; already you know the farm of a loyalist from the neatness of it". The next year Dundas was in Upper Canada where the Loyalist small farmers were "mostly thriving", already were able to supply "bread to the King's posts", and generally "find the soil excellent and the climate good". Also in 1787 Major Robert Mathews, travelling between Point au Baudet and Niagara, reported "very rapid progress", "a fine farm in a short time", "delightful" settlements, and "farms finely cleared and in great forwardness".

Several travellers commented on the overall superiority of the soil of Upper Canada compared to the Maritimes'. In 1791 in Upper Canada, Patrick Campbell reported agricultural success on "soil of clay loam, with three or four inches of rich mold, black as jet on top", which produced a harvest at least twenty fold. Campbell met a 42nd Highlander who within a year had cleared nine or ten acres on which he had got "ninety bushels of wheat, between sixty and seventy of Indian corn, besides potatoes, and other things on which he did not count. 'And what assistance had you to all that?' said I; 'None (answered he) but a hoe and axe, and what that women could give me', meaning his wife".

Campbell also enthused about the flourishing state of farming in areas of good soil in New Brunswick, such as the settlement of the 42nd Highlanders on the Nashwaak. Simon Baxter, a New England Loyalist settled on the Kennebacasis, was dubbed "the most successful farmer in raising stock and clearing land" in all New Brunswick. Arriving with only two dollars cash, Baxter had received two hundred acres of interval land where "he now sits in ease and affluence". Near Fredericton, Chief Justice George Duncan Ludlow had "a fine farm", and although it was not more than six years since the first trees were felled he was raising seventy to eighty tons of hay annually. Captain Joseph Lee, a New Jersey Loyalist, also had an excellent farm where wheat seed would return thirty fold if left to ripen fully, which was impossible because the weight would make the plants keel over. Campbell and several of the travellers were impressed by the high yields throughout Canada in soil which after several harvests needed no manure.

Apart from early hardship, which was mostly temporary, and the problem of poor soil, which was often solved simply by moving, the only negative noted by the travellers was insect pests particularly the cutworm and the so-called Hessian fly, both of which apparently were not known at home. In June 1789 Captain Booth was so dismayed by the cutworm's depredations in Shelburne gardens that he drew a sketch of the "Grub" in his diary.

Negative comments about the Loyalists are rare in the visitors' writings. An exception was Captain Booth: not surprisingly as he was stationed at Shelburne (1787-89), the only major Loyalist settlement that failed. In two "songs" the versatile Booth noted "A loyal few. . ., on Scotia's barren rocky shore,/Consign'd to labour

A view of Niagara Falls, with Indians, by Edmund Henn, 1799.

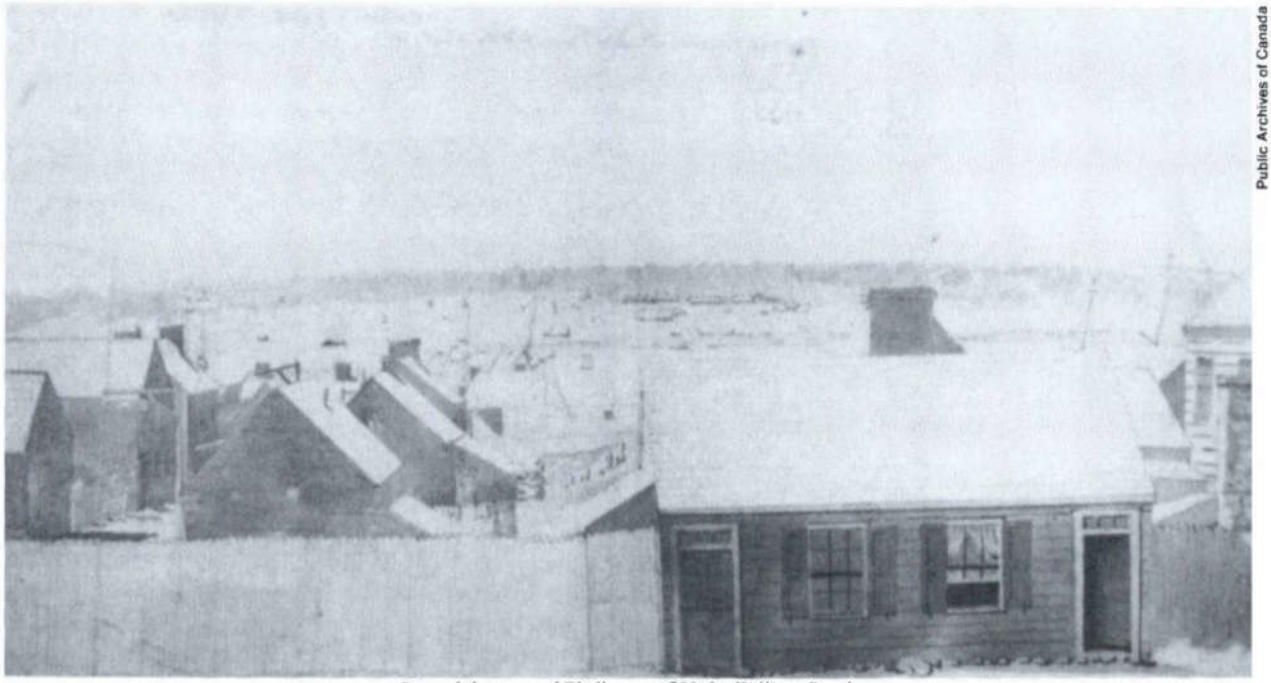
and be poor". The demoralized "Crownboys" flocked back to New York. "Being vex'd and fatigued at those frequent humbugs/Poor Yankee, frost bitten his shoulder then shruggs./ He collects his few chattles that remained in the ground/And sets off with a copper for every pound". The dismayed Booth learned that there was cheating "even by People in Office", one of whom had put two of his dogs in the list of Loyalists eligible for government rations.

Lord Selkirk offered a glimpse of Loyalist problems resulting from the chaotic land system in Prince Edward Island; Rochefoucauld took a dim view of a Kingston that had no market, no newspaper, no town hall, no prison, no court house and only one church which "resembles a barn more than a church", — unlike the British travellers the Frenchman stuck more to reality than potential; but most travellers stressed progress.

Patrick Campbell is one of the liveliest of the commentators and a good example of the positive approach. When he arrived in 1791, in contrast to Samuel Kelly eight years earlier, he found Saint John "well planned" with about 500 houses "well painted. They have a neat appearance, some even elegant; generally consisting of two stories high. The shops, stores and wharfs, numerous and commodious". The city boasted two churches. Fredericton also impressed him: "Many of the houses have a noble appearance". He particularly noted the dwellings of Colonel Isaac Allan, Governor Thomas Carleton and Chief Justice Ludlow ("elegant and commodious").

More than a decade after Campbell, in July 1804, Lady Hunter arrived in New Brunswick accompanied by masses of luggage and supplies, including furniture. Her charming letters are enthusiastic and suggest that progress, especially in agriculture, was maintained. Saint John was "a delightful place; everybody looks stout and hale and contented". She and her party soon set out up river for Fredericton. En route they dropped in on General John Coffin who had a good farm and smoked "vast quantities of salmon". Lady Hunter pronounced the "province is quite in an infant state, but very flourishing for the time it has been settled", a refrain typical of the travellers. The environs of Fredericton were "most beautiful, provisions cheap, and a good climate". The only expensive items were imported clothes and servants.

Her letters reveal something of the life of Fredericton society. The "gay season" began after Christmas with people in "over-shoes, great coats, and immense hoods stuffed three inches thick with eiderdown . . .



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Part of the town of Shelburne, 1789, by William Booth.

flying about in sleighs in the morning, and going to gregorys [card parties] and dances in the evening". The excessive eating and drinking, which she attributed to the cold climate, was furious: "tea, coffee, cakes, and then in an hour or two cold turkey, ham and profusion of tarts, pies and sweetmeats; punch, wine, porter, liqueurs, and all sorts of drink". Even workmen demanded abundant victuals: "you never see them employed in any way but stuffing themselves". Lady Hunter would agree with an earlier, anonymous visitor that dancing was the "Ruling Passion" of Canadians. Anon continued: "These entertainments are not like many English Assemblies, mere bread and butter billets, where nothing is met with but cold tea and vapid negus, but parties at which the exhausted dancers may recruit with a substantial supper". Lady Hunter concluded that the mad round of dances caused her to "become young again". In February and March the partying actually intensified because of the sitting of the legislature when "all the lawyers come from St. John". Lady Hunter was soon convinced that New Brunswick society was advanced. "I see very little difference in point of comforts, even luxuries — to what you have in England." (Even at "the extremity of Lake Ontario" in the early 1790s Anon was surprised to find that "Feathers, trinkets, and all the paraphernalia, which distinguish the haughty dames of Britain were visible".)

Sojourns in Halifax offered Lady Hunter no change of pace: "constant levées, . . . Such *grand* dinners . . . almost killed with feasting and dancing". She added a delightful peek at Governor Sir John Wentworth and his wife: she dressing much younger than her age, "the funniest creature I ever met with . . . . Sir John equally gay for his years . . . I never saw a pair better matched, . . . so fond of each other, so alike in style of dress and manners, and both, too, love lap dogs and birds, and all sort of pets".

Somewhat earlier than Lady Hunter another woman, the young talented aristocratic, rather autocratic, Elizabeth Simcoe accompanied her husband to the other end of the country. Like Lady Hunter Mrs. Simcoe was, of course, part of the official circle, and their recorded experiences are quite similar. Both enjoyed *Emily Montague*, both noted the forest, clearing the land, mosquitoes, the winters. Both possessed a lively curiosity and enjoyed their Canadian times immensely. Indeed, Lady Hunter hated to leave Fredericton, and Mrs. Simcoe wrote of her dismay when she landed in England in 1796: "the fields looked so cold, so damp, so cheerless, so uncomfortable from want of our bright Canadian sun". A similar round of teas, eating, drinking and dancing was recorded especially at Niagara, but the Simcoes faced a much rawer frontier than the Hunters. In 1792 Mrs. Simcoe counted only fifteen houses at Cornwall and fifty at Kingston. Instead of an elegant government house, as at Fredericton, at Niagara they lived in marquees. Later at York they inhabited a canvas house once used by Captain Cook. However, there was progress. In 1794 Governor Simcoe wrote to the Duke of Portland that Niagara, which had only two houses on his arrival, now had over fifty

"and rapidly increasing". At York the Simcoes built "Castle Frank", a summer home, on the plan of a "Grecian Temple", built totally of logs, including log pillars sixteen feet high. As well as her diary Mrs. Simcoe left many sketches and paintings, a prime pictorial record of Upper Canada.

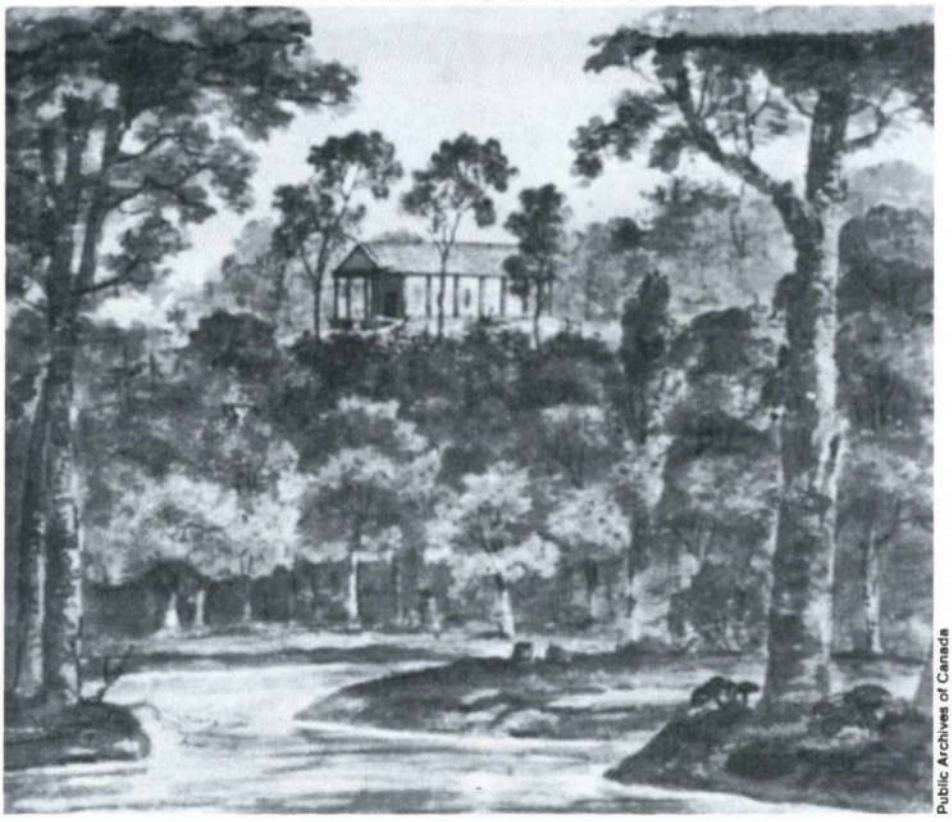
As the reader will already have noticed, several travel accounts are redolent of Frederick Jackson Turner's thesis regarding the effects of the frontier. The equality, real or supposed, described by Turner was commonly noted. Captain Booth at Shelburne, on being informed that "a Gentleman" awaited him, found in fact "that the poor fellow was either a carpenter, smith, or mason begging for employment".

The reasons given for Canadian equality usually smacked of Turner. Gubbins attributed it to the availability of land; so did Robert Hunter when he quoted a Loyalist settler who complained in 1785 that he could not hire workers because all men "can get land of their own and work for themselves, and everybody knows how pleasing it is to be their own master". George Head formed "a favourable estimate of the poor" of British North America "over those of our own" because "the inhabitants bear so different a proportion to the cultivated soil". In New Brunswick Lord Edward Fitzgerald rather over-strongly proclaimed: "The equality of everybody . . . . There are no gentlemen; everyman is on a footing (providing he works) and wants nothing; everyman is exactly what he can make himself. . . ".

The availability of land made servants and tenants scarce ("not to be had for love nor money"), and drove up the price of labour. Gubbins believed wages were so high that "the weakest and oldest may earn a livelyhood and there are no poor". Rochefoucauld reported no paupers whatsoever in the Kingston district. The egalitarian social consequences of prosperity have already been suggested. A further complaint came from parts of New Brunswick where, according to Gubbins, the hired "will not submit to be called servants but help or hireling and stipulate to dine with the master and mistress whom they call Mr. or Mrs.". However, Gubbins added tartly, they will "not extend this system of equality to the Negroes". The situation was so desperate that some of Fredericton's richest families "are occasionally without a female domestic". More seriously others declared that "enormous wages" obstructed "agricultural improvement" and various "advantageous . . . works".

The traditional criterion for a gentleman as someone who did not work with his hands was of little use, especially during the early years when professional men, and even wealthy merchants and land owners, were

Castle Frank, a Greek temple made of logs overlooking the Don River.



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forced personally to cut down trees and work the land. In 1784 Beverley Robinson Jr., a scion of a rich New York family, beginning a farm at Wilmot, Nova Scotia, by felling trees and building a log house, was "obliged to labour with his own hands".

According to Gubbins the economic base of farmed land had a continuing tendency to level. The sons of the gentlemen Loyalists were "obliged to undergo all the drudgery of farming and hold their situations above the vulgar /only/ by their superior skill and industry". But this struggle for survival caused their sons' education and manners to be inferior to that of their parents. Even the Anglican clergymen in New Brunswick, apart from the lucky ones at Saint John, Fredericton and St. Andrews, could not live like gentlemen, as in the old country, but easily declined into "rustics". They owed "most of their comforts to . . . manual exertions".

Even fifty years after the Loyalists arrived one finds quotations with a familiar ring. "When we first came here, our hands were soft and delicate as those of a lady . . . but seeing everyone around us employed at manual works — magistrates, senators, councillors and colonels, without any feeling of degredation, we fairly set to, in the spirit of cumulative industry".

There were, of course, countervailing forces. The Loyalist elite strove mightily to preserve their privileged position. As Howard Temperley has nicely demonstrated the British government, partly inadvertently, introduced "a rudimentary welfare state" through compensation, half-pay, civil pensions and jobs, all of which modified the Turnerian model. John Saunders might sit on his vast estate, the "Barony", near Fredericton, "a wilderness of his own creation", without roads or tenants, but he was an influential man, and lived well on his half pay as a former captain in the Queen's Rangers, compensation for losses in Virginia, and 500 pounds per annum as a judge of the New Brunswick supreme court. Further avenues to success for Loyalists lay in the lumber trade and other mercantile ventures.

The Turnerian frontier characteristics of self-sufficient versatility and co-operation were mentioned by many travellers. "A division of labour does not answer well in a new country", said John McGregor about Prince Edward Island. "The American Loyalists . . . are . . . independent . . . building their own houses . . . . The men make their own shoes, their ploughs, harrows and carts, as well as sledges and cabriolles; the women spin, knit and weave linens and coarse woollen cloth for domestic use". Gubbins said of New Brunswick: "The farmers . . . have almost everything made at home that is required for the use of their families. They are their own weavers, dyers, taylors, shoemakers and carpenters". There are several descriptions of familiar wilderness co-operation when neighbours got together to clear land, raise a house, hold a quilting bee. These communal efforts invariably ended in feasting and drinking. Gubbins noted that when Mrs. Glenie was deserted by the well-known radical, James Glenie, she was automatically well-taken care of by her neighbours. Gubbins continued that fire victims were always recompensed by "liberal subscriptions" which sometimes put them "in a state of affluence they did not enjoy before", and added: "Robbery is here almost unknown".

Finally another comment from Gubbins with a Turnerian ring: "The American farmers are generally of a dissatisfied turn and often on a mere report of there being better land in another district, they dispose of the fruits of their toil for many years in search of a new establishment. I have scarcely spoken to one of them who has not cleared two or three spots before he could satisfy himself, and sold the one abandoned (very often the best) for a fourth of what it cost him to get into order . . . ".

There are very few direct comments on local politics. Charles Turner, a visiting American, took a jaundiced view of New Brunswick elections to the assembly: "the people are sure to be made drunk at the candidate's expense". A Major B.P. Griffiths, who was running at Woodstock, "was a small man in every sense of the word", and a fine logician, "if logic consists in observations made which are at open war with every principle of reason and common sense".

Gubbins in 1811 made the following acerbic comment: "the members of the lower house are many of them poor and ignorant, to whom the ten shillings a day whilst employed is their greatest object of ambition and their private interests and popularity are more consulted than is the public good".

Gubbins saw great danger in the New Brunswick system of government because the governor lacked patronage and the assembly disbursed all the funds, which was sowing the "seeds of a separation". The inhabitants became "national New Brunswickers and naturally seek for precedent in the democratic and tumultuous meeting of their neighbours in Massachusetts, rather then in a record of the British House of Commons". Gubbins was not the first to forecast the eventual independence of the Loyalist provinces.

Rochefoucauld wrote that everything he saw or heard in Upper Canada rendered it "extremely probable, that her dependance on England will not be of long duration". The reasons included "the [American] spirit of independence" which was gaining ground, and his expectation that a contraband trade of cheaper United States goods would lead to an unpopular war. The Frenchman, however, in contrast to Charles Turner, did not apparently expect annexation. Turner thought that most New Brunswick Loyalists would prefer to return to the United States if it were economically

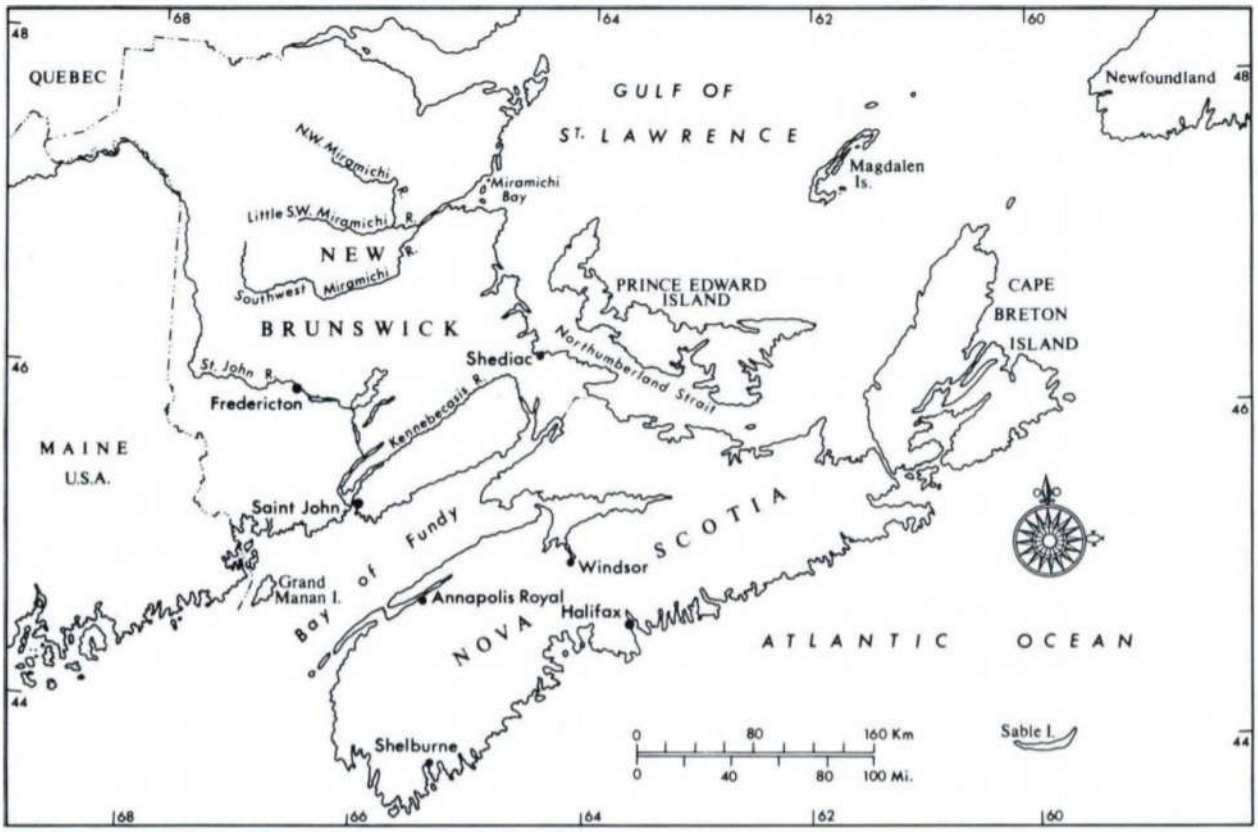
Chief Justice Ludlow's house on the River St. John five miles above Fredericton, 1807.

feasible, and further, "almost all the common people . . . secretly wish (and many openly declare their wishes) to be annexed to the United States". A few years earlier Patrick Campbell had dismissed such notions of independence and annexation, arguing that the West Indian trade alone, never mind the natural allegiance of the Loyalists, would prevent it.

Turner, the American, was alone in expecting annexation. All the other travellers who commented stressed the dislike of the Loyalists for the United States. In 1785 Joseph Hadfield expected the refugees to "take up arms again whenever required", while the principle of loyalty instilled in their children, plus "the recollection of what they have suffered from the States will make this the barrier between them". In 1796 Isaac Weld recorded that in Upper Canada, "it is common to hear, even from the children of the refugees, the most gross invective poured out against the people of the States". As the rancour was shared by Americans Weld did not expect that Upper Canada would ever join the United States. In 1811 Gubbins believed that the New Brunswick people "entertain the most sovereign contempt and hatred for their neighbours in the United States". About 1819 Fanny Wright said that the better off people of Upper and Lower Canada agreed on only one thing — their dislike of the United States.

It is well-known that American frontiersmen quite soon outnumbered the Loyalists in Upper Canada. As early as 1785 Robert Hunter, west of Montreal, quoted a settler who complained: "A great many people who are not Loyalists come and settle here", received the same treatment, got land grants — it was "very unfair". Hunter also mentioned the "impudence" of Major André's executioner who settled at Johnstown until discovered when he was tried, flogged and "sent back to the states". In 1795 Rochefoucauld claimed that many immigrants "falsely" praised the monarchy and cursed the republic "for the mere purpose of thus wheedling themselves into the possession of lands". In 1803 Lord Selkirk met a lady Loyalist waxing very indignant at the Yankees — she mentioned having overheard two of those who came in, "in consequence of Simcoe's proclamation in 1796, talking of the French Revolution and saying that if the Amns had done like them and hanged all the Tories they would have had much less trouble".

There are several tributes to the usefulness of children who, wrote Gubbins, "constitute the riches of parents". Robert Hunter congratulated a Loyalist on



the birth of a baby because "it would be fifty acres for him and half an allowance in other provisions. 'Yes', says he, 'a child is better than a calf. It does not run among the corn the first year.' " More importantly than begetters of land and provisions children constituted a guaranteed workforce, particularly in a land where hired workers were scarce. Thus, "a widow with a large family is caught at as a fortune", and "as soon as a child can walk, he becomes useful in some shape or other".

A striking example of family enterprise in the person of Captain James French, formerly of Delancey's brigade, was recorded by Patrick Campbell. French had a good farm on the Nashwaak River where, "He himself and son, who is also a half-pay officer, manage and carry on the work without, while his wife and daughters do the dairy, and within. By laudable attention and industry, he lives in affluence, and independent of the trouble and expense of servants, while many of his brother officers who trust to them, get in debt, become poor, and the next thing to bankruptcy".

Captain William Booth found Loyalists' children at Shelburne both precocious and rude. "Children here are wonderfully cunning and curious in this Country beyond anything I ever met with". Gubbins said that Loyalists' sons "appear impatient for the moment when the law shall release them from parental authority that they may remove to clear land and cultivate some remote spot". He added: "Nothing is more objectionable in the American character than the want of attachment to parents". Shades here of a perennial Old World complaint, or is it prejudice? Certainly Booth displayed his snooty Englishness when he expanded his comment. "The Commonalty of Americans seem to possess something of that of the French Nation — Much Artfulness, and consequently, little sincerity. This is a general opinion amongst the English I have met with in this Country, as well as from my own observations".

British prejudice against the ancient French enemy was common in descriptions of Acadians and Canadians (i.e. French Quebecers) as simple folk mired in "Dirt and Idleness", besotted with Catholicism, devoid of industry and initiative. Complaints about feudal land tenure in Quebec reinforced the prejudice. In 1785 Joseph Hadfield said that the Loyalists were turning to fruit growing, a crop neglected by the *Canadiens*. Lord Edward Fitzgerald ranked New Brunswickers in four ascending groups: Indians, French, "old English settlers, and now the Refugees . . .; the last seem the most civilized". The contrast with the Loyalists was always in the latter's favour. Typical was Patrick

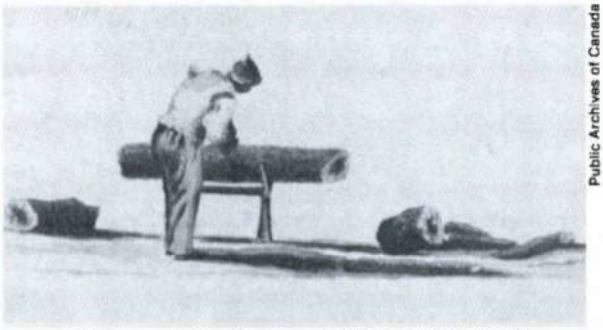
Campbell who believed that in eight years the Loyalists had cleared almost as much land as the French had in one hundred. He added, less typically, that the reason was "more owing to the tenure of the land, than to laziness on the part of the French and industry on that of the British and American loyalists".

Robert Hunter and Joseph Hadfield were rare examples of travellers who empathized with the French. Although mildly annoyed by their boatmen's constant halting *"pour allumer la pipe"*, the young Englishmen were impressed by their tenacious skill on the river when "they sing to the motion of their oars, forgetting all their hard labor and keep as good time as the best musicians in Europe could do". Hunter, Hadfield and their crew revelled in camaraderie. After passing the last of the St. Lawrence rapids, "We were *baptisé* according to the custom . . . . They throw some water in your face with wet leaves, and swearing *que vous ne toucherez pas la fille d'aucun habitant"*.

John Lambert, an Englishman who arrived in Quebec in 1806 in order to sponsor hemp growing, was another somewhat sympathetic observer of the *habitants* who also noted their addiction to pipe-smoking. He saw them as simple, frugal, self-sufficient folk, much less educated than the English-speaking Canadians, given to eating and dancing, and like Americans driving on the right hand side of the road. He noted that while their speech contained "obsolete words" it was increasingly since the conquest being influenced by what we would call franglais. As for "their behavior to strangers" it was "never influenced by the cut of a coat. . . . It is civil to all without distinction of person".

In one aspect only were the French considered superior. The consensus was that they had a better sense of rank and class. One traveller entering Lower Canada from Upper Canada observed that not only "the low, deep-roofed Canadian dwelling house gives place to the . . . Yankey fir-boarded mansion", but the "French bow" gave place to the "half sulking nod . . . ". When the American or Englishman nods " 'tis like the growling salutation of a mastiff, who has not quite leisure enough to turn and quarrel with you".

Naturally some travellers found elements of the crude, the quaint and the provincial in English-speaking Canada. At first money was so scarce that barter was common and professional men were forced to farm by lack of fees. As late as 1811 Gubbins noted the prevalence of barter in New Brunswick: the German Loyalist doctor, Charles Gunter, got his fees from his country patients in the form of "hay, salt, fish, or banded pork". A woman asked Robert Hunter six dollars for a violin not worth sixpence. "This", he said, "shows how scarce good violins are in this country". It also illustrated ignorance or perhaps greed. Gubbins met an old man on the Miramichi of "rather a literary turn" who was almost bankrupted when he blindly



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A black woodcutter, Shelburne, 1788, by William Booth.

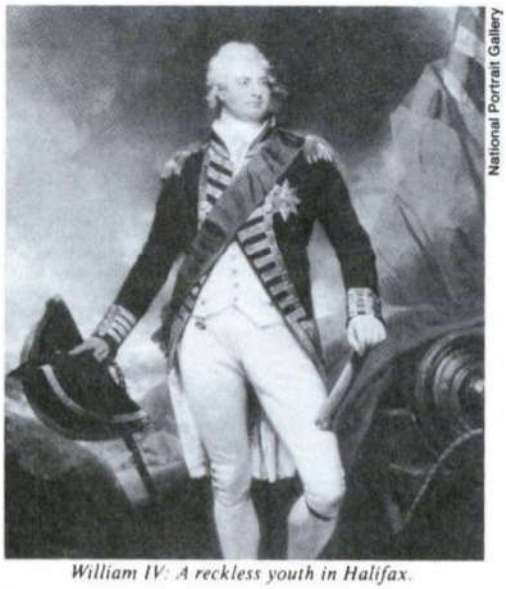
ordered a complete set of the *Philosophical Transactions*. In the interior of Upper Canada "no news penetrates . . ., a circumstance that excites very little regret"; in 1813 at Escuminac, New Brunswick, the Acadians "had not even heard of Bonaparte".

A note of metropolitan derision was sounded by Lady Hunter when she reported the "droll" sight of *beau monde* ladies in "pink and lilac high-heeled, small-toed shoes, walking over the rugged, rocky paths" of the city of Saint John. They did not "look very like the ladies of the present day in England". At the linguistic level Gubbins was amused by the perennial North American propensity of euphemism. "The ridiculous delicacy of their expressions is very diverting. A New Brunswick lady conceives it indecorous to call a male bird a cock, for which they substitute rooster, even to weather rooster, knees they denominate benders, and so on".

Perhaps the most interesting comments on provincialism were made by Patrick Campbell. Generally he stressed the Loyalists' successful adaptation to their new environment, but he was surprised to find neglect of the excellent, local wood for furniture making. "So prevalent is custom, and the desire for emulation, the bane of society, that many gentlemen here, who cannot well afford it, have mahogany furniture in abundance, and despise what can be got at their doors". (Chief Justice Ludlow, however, was an exception.) In the same vein Campbell found Simon Baxter, a New Hampshire Loyalist settled on the Kennebecasis, enjoying "Labrador tea" (made from a local shrub) while his wife and daughters drank "souchong" for fashion's sake. Baxter was convinced they would drink Labrador if only it cost two dollars a pound!

In conclusion it is perhaps fitting to consider briefly how the travellers viewed two extremes of the social spectrum: at the top royalty, at the bottom blacks and Indians.

During the war and for a time afterwards many Loyalists in various locations were vouchsafed a sight of what for many was the *summum bonum:* Prince William Henry, son of George III, destined to reign as William IV. The prince, a serving naval officer,



William IV: A reckless youth in Halifax.

befriended Lieutenant Dyott during visits to Halifax in 1787 and 1788. They were both in their twenties and shared a common interest in loose women and heavy drinking — not always but often at the same time. At one dinner the prince "gave twenty-three bumpers without a halt", the result being that the guests of honour, who included Governor John Parr, got falling-down drunk. The young pair shared many "pretty scenes" in the Halifax brothels all of which the prince knew "perfectly". He was also "a frequent visitor" at Mrs. Wentworth's while Mr. Wentworth was conveniently away on business as surveyor-general of the woods. Dyott remarked: "Mrs. Wentworth is a most charming woman, but unhappily for her husband rather more partial to our sex than her own. But he, poor man, cannot see her foibles, and they live very happy." Dyott added that "the ladies of Halifax are a little scrupulous of their virtue and think it in danger if they were to visit Mrs. Wentworth". William's time was not entirely debauched. Apart from numerous official duties he dined with several Loyalists including Abraham Cuyler, the ex-mayor of New York, who had moved to Sydney, where the prince got "outrageously drunk", and Stephen Skinner, a prominent New Jersey Loyalist, who lived at Shelburne. Patrick Campbell recorded chatting with George Leonard, a prominent Loyalist who lived at Sussex, New Brunswick, about how at the end of the war a Spanish admiral attributed Britain's strength to the fact that "so high a character would serve in so low a station". Mrs. Leonard asked what station the prince was then in; he had answered, "in that which her two sons were, that is, midshipman", which Campbell doubtless correctly surmised was "very gratifying . . . to an American loyalist".

There was little serious comment on black Loyalists (or slaves) by the travellers. Typically Gubbins mentioned only two things, both equally sensational: the birth of a mulatto daughter to a hitherto respectable white woman, and the alleged cannibalism of a black deserter. To "work like a Negro" was a common metaphor. There was some description of poor conditions. At the Birchtown, near Shelburne, Dyott wrote: "I think I never saw wretchedness and poverty so strongely perceptible in the garb and countenance of the human species as in these miserable outcasts". The only sustained sympathetic account is the diary of the philanthropic Lieutenant Clarkson which is one long, heart felt indictment of white Nova Scotians, summed up by the laconic "Justice [is] scarcely ever done to the Blacks" who were considered "no better . . . than beasts".

Indians were taken more seriously than blacks by the travellers. Wigwams, canoes, native costumes, hunting methods, curios (Lady Hunter sent home "bonnie boxes made by the Indians") and the like were of enduring, exotic allure. Further, the aborigines on the one hand were needed as guides and traders, and on the other were still somewhat feared as possible adversaries. Although Indians got more space than blacks in travel accounts their treatment was not much more sophisticated or sympathetic (Gubbins was something of an exception). Regularly dubbed "savages" they could excite apprehension ("for fear of their long knives"), ridicule (Hadfield addressed one, *"Vous êtes beau comme un cochon"* — *"You are as handsome as a pig"*), surprise (the Indian understood him), greed (Hunter tried to trade watered rum, "but they were too cunning for us"), suspicion (Campbell claimed a ferryman tried to cheat), admiration (spearing sturgeon in the St. Lawrence rapids was an activity "Europeans would have trembled at"), pity ("squalid miserable-looking beings"), contempt ("idle, extravagant and drunken"), lust (the mistresses of army officers wallowed "in every kind of depravity"), and above all condescension ("my 'sisters', the squaws, are come to visit . . . with their faces painted all the colours of the rainbow").

The great exception to condescension was Joseph Brant and, to a degree, "his warlike tribe of handsome young [Iroquois] warriors", who had been loyal during the war and re-settled in Upper Canada. Many travellers visited and admired the famous Mohawk chief though sometimes in the way of Dr. Johnson's women preachers. "His manners are semi-European. He is attended by two negroes, has established himself in the English way; has a garden and a farm; dresses after the European fashion . . . . His deportment, at table, is perfectly that of a gentleman." ♦

Wallace Brown teaches history at the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton.

A FATE WORSE THAN DEATH

Indian Captivity Stories Thrilled Victorian Readers — But Were They True?

By SARAH CARTER

Stories of people "captured" by Indians have been popular in North America since the early days of European settlement but were especially so in the late nineteenth century when a taste for exotic literature arose. These tales were generally melodramatic and sensational, playing up supposed Indian barbarities and outrages in order to titillate, shock and horrify. Exaggerations and improbabilities abounded in these highly fictionalized accounts. Captivity stories confirmed biases, fears and prejudices, and elicited strong anti-Indian sentiment. They reinforced an image of the Indian as hostile and brutal, to be feared and hated, an image that was also promoted through the illustrations of "murderous savages" that often accompanied these stories. Children were often the subject of these tales, feeding on a widespread fear that Indians spent their time lurking on the edge of the wilderness ready to pounce upon any stray children. Dramatic tension was heightened when vulnerable young women were dragged off by "savage" men, feeding the appetite of the reading public for a combination of sex and violence. Although the "fate worse than death" was never actually described in lurid detail, the possibility was ever present.

In the late nineteenth century two tales of young women supposedly held captive by Indians were dramatized in the popular press. In each case the true story differed markedly from the version presented to the public. Late in 1889, the story of a white girl held captive by the Blackfoot of the Canadian North West appeared in the *London Graphic*. The author was Frederick Villiers, the special artist of the *Graphic* who had accompanied Governor General Lord Stanley and the vice-regal party on a trip across the continent in 1889. Villiers claimed that at a grand reception the Blackfoot held to honour the visitors, during which the Stanleys "braved the possibility of being tomahawked" by having their pictures taken with the Indians in war regalia, a "captive" white girl of about nine years of age was led into the camp on a pony. She was dressed in rich beadwork vestments which "ill became her fair hair and little white face," according to Villiers. The artist hoped that publicity would result in the child being "handed over to people of her own color" — although he admitted that she appeared to be treated with great care and affection by her "captors". It was the fate that awaited her when she was a few years older that Villiers found "sad to contemplate". The artist claimed to have been told that the child was captured during a raid in the United States during which her officer father was killed.

While in New York early in 1890, Villiers embel-

Villiers drawing for The Graphic, 30 November 1889. Lord Stanley and party receive a deputation of Cree.

lished and embroidered the story of the "waif of the plains" for the *New York World*. This time the captive maiden was described as "almost regal" and "her little white face, with small, regular features, and bright grey eyes stood out of a wealth of golden hair," although this glorious mane was besprinkled with dust and grit. Villiers declared he had never seen a whiter complexion in his life, and believed there "was no Indian blood in her veins". An old Indian claiming to be her father wanted only to draw her daily rations and annuity according to Villiers.

Many further details had been added to the story by the time it reached the *Fort Macleod Gazette* on 30 January 1890. According to the *Gazette*, an Indian interpreter by the name of "Winnipeg Jack" claimed that the child, captured in a raid across the border, belonged to him. Lord Stanley had apparently tried to induce the Indians to part with the child but they had refused, although they sold her buckskin dress to Lady Stanley. Readers of the *Gazette* were informed that the matter had attracted the attention of the American government, and it had been confirmed that the child was indeed the daughter of an American officer. It was believed that an American officer was in the North West under instructions from his government to rescue the child at any cost. The editor of the *Gazette* hoped that the North West Mounted Police could aid in the search so that the child could be "saved from the wretched fate which awaits her, should she remain with the Indians".

Several days later the *Gazette* reaffirmed that there was not the slightest doubt that the story was true. The Canadian government was called upon to take immediate and prompt action to rescue the girl "from the horrible fate that is surely in store for her . . . even if it brings every Indian in the Northwest Territories about their ears". Assistance would not be lacking, as "common humanity would prompt every able-bodied man in Alberta to join in so righteous a crusade". If no government action was taken the *Gazette* warned that the fathers and brothers of Alberta would together see to it that the child was rescued, with their wives and sisters wishing them Godspeed. An anonymous correspondent to the paper wrote that the news of a white girl in the Blackfoot camp, if true, "makes ones blood boil. . . . England has gone to war before now, and sacrificed many lives to rescue a white man from savage tribes, and here is a white girl in the hands of a savage tribe, under England's own rule, liable to the most degrading life, and nothing has been done to save her!" The correspondent believed it was an everlasting disgrace to Canada that this had been allowed for a day and that it took an Englishman, an artist traveller, to call attention to it and the Americans to enquire into it. To redeem herself in the eyes of the civilized world, Canada had to take immediate action.

It was an American paper, however, that sponsored the expeditionary force into the heart of Blackfoot country. It was not unusual for papers to patronize such activity. The *New York Herald* commissioned the

expedition of Henry M. Stanley, a correspondent, to find Dr. Livingstone in 1869. The *New York World* prided itself on sending agents to all corners of the globe, to right the wrongs of the "weak and oppressed". Readers of the *World* showed great interest in the story of the "captive" girl, and sent scores of letters protesting the "outrage" and demanding that the little unfortunate be rescued. There were offers to adopt the girl and one old gentleman wanted to organize a band of cowboys to march on the Indians and seize the child by force. A Mr. C. R. Saffery of New York City suggested a *World* expedition to investigate the matter and rescue the girl. For this idea, "a labor of humanity and a public service," Mr. Saffery was awarded $500.00 in the "Idea Contest", and the expedition was undertaken. A *World* reporter was sent out with guides and ransom money in January, the bleakest part of the year, to the "remote" regions of Canada's North West. Mr. Saffery, who was acquainted with Blackfoot country, volunteered to assist in the rescue. He and the reporter met in Montreal and made their plans for the expedition. Saffery knew Jerry Potts, a scout employed by the NWMP at Fort Macleod, and believed he would be the best person to engineer the scheme. Saffery was certain that the child could be "bought" and that Indians ordinarily "sold" their children for $10.00 to $25.00. The rescuers expected they would be asked $50.00 for a white child, but were prepared to pay ten times that amount if necessary. In case the Canadian authorities objected to the child being spirited away, a quick escape was planned. From Fort Macleod they could head directly south, instead of east on the transcontinental. Along the southern escape route there were no railways or telegraphs to overhaul them and in three days they could be in Great Falls, Montana.

The *World* reporter and Saffery left Montreal on 13 January, travelling in the luxury of a palace car on the Canadian Pacific Railway. After four days' travel they disembarked at Dunmore, about 2,500 miles from the *World* office. A temperature of 35° below zero greeted them. A freight train took the rescue party to Lethbridge and a stage coach "of the Deadwood variety" landed the easterners in Fort Macleod. There the rescuers were disappointed to learn that the police surgeon had ordered Potts not to leave his house as he was suffering from the "grip". A scout by the name of Ben Derosche was hired in his stead. Potts had learned that Dog Child, the "captor" of the girl, had been in Montana about the time the child was born. A man from California believed his infant daughter was stolen by Indians in Montana at about the time that Dog Child was there. All of the rescue party's meetings in Fort Macleod were kept secret.

The long trip across the cold continent, the secrecy, escape routes and ransom money all proved unnecessary. The captive girl turned out not to be a captive

"The waif of the plains": Villiers portrays the supposed captive for The Graphic, 30 November 1889.

at all. Officials of the Department of Indian Affairs, and others acquainted with the Blackfoot were aware of this from the beginning. A year before the vice-regal visit, the *Toronto Empire* included an item on a Blackfoot sun dance in which mention was made of two white children in the possession of an Indian woman. At that time Indian Agent Magnus Begg was asked to investigate the matter. Begg determined that the children were the offspring of Pretty Gun who was married to a man named Dog Child who had no doubt that these were his own. In November 1889, when public attention was focused on the Blackfoot "captive", Begg amassed the testimony of many witnesses who were present on the reserve when Pretty Gun gave birth. Copies of affidavits establishing the parentage of the girl were sent to Department headquarters in Ottawa.

People familiar with Western Canadian Indians knew that children with light hair and complexions were not uncommon in Indian camps, and had not been since the very early days of the fur trade. Only the unacquainted traveller would be surprised or dismayed by such a sight. Notes of scepticism about aspects of the story began to appear in the press by February of 1890.

A Mr. A. A. Vice of Lethbridge wrote to the *Manitoba Free Press* that "if the Canadian Government intended laying claim to all the children living in Indian camps who have light hair, blue or grey eyes and fair skins in the Northwest Territories, it will have its hands full". He objected to the clamour to have the police march in and forcibly seize the child from the people who had raised her. For any such action an order from a court of proper jurisdiction had first to be obtained. Vice also objected to the New York paper's embellishing of the story which he believed was "the greatest hoax of the season".

The *World* expedition returned empty handed. The headlines read "Papoose After All", "The Supposed Captive White Girl Turns Out to be a Half-Breed", and "Her Mother a Squaw". The story of the expedition was nonetheless full of "thrilling adventures in the wilderness of Upper Canada". The reporter also took a good deal of trouble to ascertain the details of the case. The child, named Spotted Girl, indeed had golden hair as did her sister Morning Star. The father, interviewed on the question of the future of Spotted Girl stated that he hoped she could get an education before she married. He had sent her to Father Lacombe's school near Calgary, but she had cried for nine days, wanting to go home. She was to return when the weather was warmer. Crowfoot, the aged Chief of the Blackfoot, was also interviewed by the New York reporter. The Chief was apparently "very much surprised to think that the *World* should send men so far to look after the interests of one solitary little papoose." It was explained to him that the *World* agents were sent to every quarter of the globe to help the weak and oppressed. Although the expedition had failed to rescue a captive, it was hoped that the result would "relieve the hearts of many anxious mothers".

The frenzy of interest in the "captive" girl was stimulated in part because then, as now, there were many missing children in Canada and the United States. In Europe, gypsies were accused of luring away children and in North America it appears that Indians filled this function in the popular imagination. A Mr. A. Wimperis of Winnipeg, for example, wrote to the *Free Press* in February 1890 explaining that he employed a boy of sixteen named Johnnie Rowell who had a missing sister, Louise, aged fourteen. Their father had left the country, and their stepmother had given the children away. Louise had gone with a couple to Fort Macleod, but this marriage had broken up and it was believed the girl had been left to shift for herself. Johnnie was very anxious to find his sister again and felt it was not improbable that the girl with the Blackfoot was Louise.

In January 1898 the story of another white girl found among Indians emblazoned headlines in Canada and the United States. A Methodist clergyman by the name of O. H. Sproul was travelling through the Cheyenne River Agency in South Dakota and there he found a family "harbouring" a white girl of about fourteen named Annie Russell. Members of this family maintained that she belonged to them. A woman named Otter Robe claimed to be the child's aunt but Sproul demanded an investigation into the matter. The child was taken from the family and placed in the Children's Home at Sioux Falls.

Reverend Sproul believed the child was from Canada, and determined to find her real family or friends, he gave the "facts" as he knew them to an acquaintance in Canada hoping they would be published widely. Sproul's facts, however, showed an imperfect understanding of the recent history of these Indians. The girl was with a Dakota family who had spent some years in Canada and then returned to the United States. Sproul believed they had returned across the border to seek safety "after the Riel uprising in 1885 or some such depredation," and felt that her family had likely been murdered but that her former friends and neighbours might be of some assistance. The girl's people were in fact originally part of Sitting Bull's band who had arrived in Canadian territory seeking refuge in 1876. By 1880 most had returned across the border but a smaller group, including the girl's family, remained until 1894 camping at Moose Jaw. The *Manitoba Free Press* ran Sproul's story, but it was suggested that the reverend gentleman might have some of the circumstances skewed, as the murdering of whole families was unknown in Canada, and any cases of kidnapping would have been reported and investigated.

American papers did not show this concern for veracity and were quick to print and enlarge upon the "Romantic Mystery of a Beautiful Girl". The *New York Journal* wove a few of the facts into an otherwise fictitious story complete with illustrations of the "massacre" of her parents, her capture by a fiendish "savage", and her dreary Indian home. This paper called the girl "Swift Fawn" and she was depicted as a beautiful young maiden both in her Indian and "civilized" attire. Her Indian mother however had a hideous countenance. The *Journal* described how Swift Fawn had spent fifteen years wandering as a "nomad, a savage," pounding maize, gathering acorns, dressing hides and drawing rations. Her face was streaked with paint, she wore buckskin and was decorated with beads, strings of tin and rabbit skin tassels. Swift Fawn was to marry "Black Dog" and she "looked forward to doing the drudgery of this stalwart lazy buck without any idea that such a destiny was in the least out of the ordinary". Annie Russell had been plucked from the peaceful ranch home of the Andrew Russell family

Another Villiers view of the vice-regal tour. The ladies photograph a "war dance".

in Manitoba according to the *Journal*. Sitting Bull "was out on a raid with his devils", and they swooped down on the lonely house, murdering all but the child who became the Chief's pet. The infant changed "from an American baby into an Indian child" in dress as well as deed.

> She was one of them when they murdered and burned, and she saw the men of her tribe kill white men and women, and destroy peaceful farms, without shock or qualm, for from her Indian point of view, it was all right, and at the time Swift Fawn's only interest in the murdering like that of the other girls of the band, was merely on the question of whether she would get any gimcracks from the looted ranch houses, with which to deck herself.

There soon were responses to Reverend Sproul's appeal to find the relatives of the "prisoner". A Mr. Ludwig Stelter of Medicine Hat, for example, believed she might be his child. In 1894, Stelter's daughter Mathilde, aged six, was lost. She wandered away from Dunmore Junction heading south on the prairie toward Montana and had not been heard of since. A band of Cheyenne were rumoured to have been in the vicinity at the time and Stelter thought they might have found the girl. Mathilde's description however did not match that of Annie Russell.

John and Adelaide Turton of Cannington Manor in the Moose Mountains of the North West Territories, became absolutely convinced upon reading about Annie Russell that she was one of their then nine children. In August of 1893 Mrs. Turton allowed her three year old daughter Gertrude Ellen or Gertie to call her father, who was working in the field across the road, to come for dinner. The child was never seen again. A massive search was undertaken but no trace was found. The Turtons were certain that the child was stolen by Indians. They suspected in particular an Indian woman who did laundry for them, as she had told the couple that their child was not dead but had "marched on". It was also rumoured that there were strange Indians in the neighbourhood at the time the child went missing and it was purported that some had a crying child concealed in a covered cart.

Indian Agent T. J. Campbell of the Moose Mountain Agency did not know of any circumstances which warranted such a suspicion. Agents often had to defuse tense situations as Indians were customarily blamed for a wide spectrum of misfortunes such as missing cattle and prairie fires. Campbell felt that there were very slight grounds to suppose that Indians had stolen the child, but he thoroughly investigated the matter so that the reputation of the Indians would not suffer unfairly. To begin with, Campbell had no difficulty in getting sixteen Indians, without promise of reward, to join in the search for the child. The Agent found that

A romantic rendering of "Annie Russell" ("Swift Fawn") in native dress, from the New York Journal.

the woman who washed for the Turtons had also joined in the search. She had resided on her reserve since the incident under no suspicious circumstances. When questioned about her words to the Turtons, the woman said she had simply given her opinion that the child had not died but wandered off. Agent Campbell investigated the story of "strange" Indians and found that these proved to be members of White Bear's band of the district who resided on their reserve constantly in the months after the child's disappearance. The people with the covered cart were Métis picking berries. They travelled openly and conversed with many people they met. Among their children was one who was sick and crying. Campbell established that they did not travel within twenty miles of the Turton place.

In Campbell's opinion it was "unnecessary to seek so far afield for an explanation of the unfortunate child's disappearance". Within a few yards of the Turton house was a thick wood, filled with ponds and lakes, which extended for many miles to the west. On the other side of the house was open country dotted with thick bluffs of poplar and willow. Even with a thorough search it was quite possible to miss finding a body because of the nature of the country.

The Turtons however remained convinced that Gertie had been abducted by Indians. They corresponded with Reverend Sproul and when they received a photograph of the girl they were certain she bore a family resemblance. Neighbours also recognized family fea-

tures and they sent their written opinions to the American authorities. A lock of hair that was sent was jet black, but Mrs. Turton washed the specimen, claiming it was dyed and its true colour was brown, the colour of Gertie's hair.

In February 1898 the Turtons travelled to Sioux Falls. The child they met was sick with measles but both immediately recognized her as theirs. She was satisfactorily identified by a birth mark on her left shoulder. There were several incongruities but explanations for these were found. The Turtons were looking for an eight year old and it was believed that Annie Russell was at least thirteen. It was explained however that the Turtons were large in structure and developed early so that her size was not exceptional when compared with that of her sisters at the same age. Annie's complexion was not fair, but Mr. Turton's "knowledge of Indian practices led him to suspect that the girl's body had probably been dyed from head to foot with vegetable dye, which can only be removed very slowly and with great difficulty". Mrs. Turton believed the colour was gradually coming out. The matron of the children's home apparently applied some acid to a small spot on the neck and proved that the colour was removable.

The Turtons and their newly-found daughter were treated as celebrities during their ten days in Sioux Falls. They were "shown every attention by the leading citizens, were received into the best of families and shown all the sights of the place". Mr. Turton received two offers of marriage for his daughter, one from a young army officer. On their arrival in Winnipeg in March 1898 the Turtons were visited by a *Free Press* reporter. He found the child remarkably large for eight years and felt she still showed "the effects of the dyeing process to such an extent that a stranger might be inclined to say that she has Indian blood". Readers however were asked to rejoice with the Turtons "that their little girl Gertie had been rescued from a life of degradation, and that the family circle has been made complete again".

The sensational Turton drama faded from the headlines, but this was not quite the end of the story. Indian Agent Thomas W. Aspdin, in charge of the Assiniboine reserve in the district of Assiniboia, was well acquainted with the history of the girl and her people, and by April 1898, he was being urged to do what he could to get the child returned. An official of the U.S. Indian Service, D. F. Carlin, informed Aspdin that the woman who claimed to be the child's aunt was very sad and was anxious to get the child back. Carlin wanted affidavits and other evidence as to the child's identity. Aspdin could not ignore this appeal, allowing a "palpable wrong to be done right under my eyes". He was convinced the child would have to be given up, as the circumstances of her birth and parentage were well known. For several years Aspdin was the government agent in charge of the Dakota camp at Moose Jaw and he was married to a Dakota woman. While at Moose Jaw he had urged the Indians to return to their own country, assuring them they would find kind and fair treatment. He now felt it was the duty of the Canadian government to do everything possible to have the Turtons give up the child they wrongfully claimed as theirs. Aspdin was surprised that no effort had been made to corroborate the statements made by the child's Indian family who insisted she was theirs. He felt the matter had been handled in

> a hurried, unseemly manner, by a few people who were probably actuated more in trying to make a sensation than any other feeling, and the whole affair seems to have been carried out in a contray [*sic*] manner to that which should characterize such a serious step as taking a girl of this age (15) from her natural people and sending her hundreds of miles with strangers.

John and Adelaide Turton.

According to Aspdin, the child was born at Wood Mountain in the summer of 1883, which made her fifteen. The father, a white man named Fred Cadd, managed a trading store. The mother "Susie Her Road" lived with Cadd in the winter of 1882-83. The child was brought up in the Dakota camp. In 1891 the mother died at Moose Jaw and the child was looked after by her aunt, "Otter Robe Woman" and her grandmother. In 1894 the Dakota, numbering about fifty, went south to the Cheyenne River. Aspdin was certain that the Turtons had not a shadow of a right to the child, and he provided the names of ranchers, missionaries and policemen who also knew the history of the child.

The Turtons were informed of the history of the child according to Aspdin but they remained confident that she was their Gertie, and refused to give her up on any account. Aspdin believed the next step was to bring a claim for damages against them, but he was willing

"Swift Fawn in civilized clothes", from the New York Journal.

to first travel to their farm to persuade them to give the child up quietly. He sympathized with the couple in the loss of their daughter but felt that "a woman's desire to find a long lost one appears to destroy their cooler judgement". In his correspondence Aspdin likened the Turton story to the Tichborne Case, the most celebrated impersonation case in English law. In the mid-nineteenth century Sir James and Lady Tichborne lost their son Roger when his ship bound for Jamaica went down. Some years later a man claiming to be the lost Roger appeared on the doorstep. In her grief Lady Tichborne insisted this was her son, although it was proved in court that he was an imposter, a Mr. Arthur Orton, the son of a Wapping butcher.

A "happy solution" to the Turton case was proposed by U.S. Senator James H. Kyle, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Education and Labour. In May 1898 Kyle informed Canadian Indian Affairs officials that an Inspector in the U.S. Indian Department, who was acquainted with Otter Robe Woman, could "easily" get papers of release and consent that she be adopted by the Turtons. Kyle, who was still inclined to believe that she was "really a white child", felt that as she was now approaching womanhood she would be "a thousandfold better off in a good American home than among her former associates". (It appears to have slipped the Senator's mind that the Turtons were offering a good Canadian home.)

In July 1898 an Inspector James McLaughlin visited the people of the Cheyenne River reservation. His report established beyond a doubt that Annie Russell was not the Turtons' daughter but he did obtain the "written consent" of Otter Robe Woman and her husband, Dog Eagle, agreeing to the adoption. It was however, only a conditional consent. The woman agreed that her niece Anatanwin or Charging Female or Annie Russell, aged fifteen, might be adopted by the Turtons, provided she was properly cared for and educated. She was to write to her aunt at least once every three months until she reached the age of eighteen. At that time she was to "decide for herself, without any undue influence, and determine of her own free will, whether she elects to remain with said Turtons or return to her relatives at Cheyenne River Agency". Her name was to be retained on the rolls of the agency until she had reached the age of majority and determined whether she wished to return to her relatives or remain with the Turtons.

The Turtons returned with their daughter Gertie, who spoke only Dakota, to Rosemont, the large stone house on their homestead which still stands today. She became one of their eleven surviving children. Mrs. Turton gave birth to seventeen children, including three sets of twins. It appears that Gertie remained with her new family, later moving to Creelman, Saskatchewan.

The Turtons were motivated by personal loss and grief to see Annie as their Gertie and make her part of the family. Judging from the public clamour to "rescue the prisoners", however, it appears that non-native society was quite prepared to make true "captives" of these girls, taking them from family and community because of inaccurate, sensational information combined with ingrained fear and prejudice. ◆

Sarah Carter is a Winnipeg historian who has done extensive research on nineteenth century Western Canadian history.

Our Intrepid Reporter

Sara Jeanette Duncan Sees the World And Finds Romance Without a Chaperone

By Cheryl MacDonald

Beginning in the late fall of 1888, readers of the *Montreal Star* were entertained and sometimes scandalized by the adventures of two young women on a world tour.

The tone of the articles was witty, often breathless, sometimes sardonic, but never dull. How could it be, when the two young women had purposely set out in search of adventure, deliberately ignoring numerous conventions on the way? In the first place, although they were both in their twenties and unmarried, they travelled without a chaperone. In the second, they were going around the world from west to east when most people travelled in the opposite direction. They left Brantford, Ontario, in September 1888, reached Japan in November, India in March 1889, and Egypt the next month. Purposely straying from the beaten path, they sought out exotic sights and sounds and experiences with no thought of timetables, schedules, or tourist guidebooks.

They rode a locomotive cowcatcher through the Rockies, travelled by donkey, camel and elephant, got thoroughly soaked riding a catamaran from ship to shore in Ceylon. In Tokyo, they bypassed the foreign quarter, rented a tiny house and hired servants to tend to their needs. Everywhere they went, they made friends, laughed until the tears came, and stored away memories to entertain the readers back home.

The author of the *Star* articles was Sara Jeanette Duncan, who had suggested the trip. Accompanied by her journalist friend, Lilly Lewis ("Orthodocia" in the newspaper stories), Sara not only paid her passage with her pen, she also laid the foundation for a career as a novelist and found romance.

The adventurous global jaunt was completely in keeping with Sara Duncan's character. Ambitious and determined, she was always open to new experiences, especially if she could turn them into profitable copy. Since childhood, she had wanted to be a writer, and her determination to make her dream come true had led her to become the first woman employed full-time by a Canadian newspaper.

Born 22 December 1861 in Brantford, Ontario, she had been christened Sarah Janet Duncan, a name that metamorphosed into Sara Jeanette Duncan as she gained literary fame. Her father, Charles, was a Scot who had emigrated to Saint John, New Brunswick, where he met Jane Bell, an Irish girl living in nearby Shediac. Following their marriage, they settled in Brantford, where Charles established a profitable dry goods and furniture store. From him, Sara inherited sound business sense and a good eye for colour and line. Both would be useful in her career, for in addition to hardheaded dealings with publishers and editors, she had a wonderful knack for describing what she saw in her prose.

Although the Duncans were well-regarded in the small Ontario manufacturing town on the Grand River, they kept themselves apart from the mainstream of Brantford society, and Sara's most intense early friendships were with her own brothers and sisters. It was a happy situation, and a fortunate one for a girl who would be one of the "new women" of the 1880s and 1890s. Both parents had advanced ideas about the upbringing of girls, as Sara revealed in her semi-autobiographical articles in the *Toronto Globe*.

> . . . romping and fresh air were important factors in your development, and while you may have learned your alphabet under the old system, you were not compelled to sit in the house and sew samplers and keep your petticoats clean, your slippers in shape,

and your hair in curl, because you were a little girl. You climbed apple trees and fences and tore your clothes and raced and rioted and had as generally good and uproarious a time as your brothers had. Perhaps you even played hockey with them — I did, with crooked sticks and wrinkled horse-chestnuts, in intervals of taffy-making, over a big kitchen floor.

Still, Sara did not escape all the expectations Victorian society had of young women. As the oldest of a large family, she was expected to help with household chores and child care. As a housekeeper, she was far from successful, and not much better as a nursemaid. Her brother Archie, 19 years younger than Sara, recalled how she put him in a drawer, safely out of her way, when she was occupied with other things. Another time, she tacked his long skirts to the floor to limit his movement. Sara was more interested in reading and writing than caring for an active younger brother. Soon after she learned to read, she decided that the only career for her was writing.

> I remember once entertaining, and unguardedly expressing, at the age of nine, a wild desire to write a novel. "Put it out of your mind, my dear", nodded a placid old lady of the last century, over her knitting. "Novel making women always come to some bad end." — *(Globe,* 12 November 1886)

Sara ignored the warning, setting her sights on something even more scandalous, a career in journalism.

Although her parents, especially her father, had encouraged her to find a career in which she would be happy, this was too much. Her mother was shocked. Journalism was a male-dominated field — the smoke-filled, masculine atmosphere of the typical newspaper office was no place for a lady. The few women whose work appeared in Canadian newspapers all wrote from home.

Her mother also pointed out that she had earned exactly $10 from her writing, certainly not enough on which to live. But Sara would not be deterred. She was hardly alone in wanting to break out of the feminine mold into which Victorian society tried to force its young women. Among her friends were Pauline Johnson, who would gain fame as a poet, and Augusta Stowe, who, following in her mother Emily's footsteps, would become the first woman to graduate from a Canadian medical school. Initial opposition to her schemes simply made Sara try harder.

At first, she compromised by earning a teacher's certificate. Teaching was a respectable occupation for women, after all, and her parents approved. Sara, however, hated it, although there was one unexpected benefit. While studying for her certificate, she met George Ross, an inspector of schools, who would later become provincial minister of education and, eventually, provincial premier. Ross was also a journalist who

Public Archives of Canada

Sara Jeanette Duncan, "new woman" of the early 1890s.

wrote for the *Globe,* and his example must have helped Sara solidify her plans. For the time being, though, she pursued her hateful teaching career.

By the time she enrolled in Toronto's Normal School to earn her second-class teaching certificate in January 1882, Sara had sold a poem to the *Globe* and an essay to a popular magazine, The *Canadian Monthly.* In October, four months after graduating from normal school, she sold a poem to the same magazine. Around the same time, she and her brother visited an uncle in Quebec. It was a trip which would change her life.

Like any tourist, Sara explored the countryside, visiting Montmorency Falls and Lorette. But, unlike other tourists, she recorded her experiences in sharp, descriptive prose, and sold both pieces to *Outing,* a Boston magazine. Each article brought her $10, more than a month's teaching salary, and provided an invaluable lesson. From now on, Sara realized, if she wanted to sell her writing, she "must have some unworn incident, some fiber of novelty or current interest to give value to her work".

A year and a half later, she was still striving towards her goal. When Ned Sheppard, editor of the *Toronto News* visited Brantford, Sara called on him. Sheppard later recalled the meeting for *Saturday Night* magazine:

> I was met by a rather tall and slender miss, whose bright eyes and freckled face were pleasant to see.

> The young woman desired a position on a newspaper and felt sure she could do lots of useful things and write entertainingly of many subjects just then neglected by the daily press.

Sara may have been ready to enter the world of journalism, but journalism was not ready for her. Sheppard turned her down.

Disappointed, Sara set her sights a little lower, and persuaded the *Brantford Courier* to hire her. They gave her work — but Sara was still not satisfied. An advertisement in a New York paper offering her services brought no response. And then Sara hit upon a plan that would finally open the door for her.

Advertisements for the New Orleans Cotton Centennial, a world's fair beginning in December 1884, reached her desk at the *Courier*. Recalling the success she had with her Quebec travel articles, Sara decided to gamble on New Orleans. She took the train to Toronto and called on John Cameron, editor of the *Globe*. By the time the interview was over, Cameron agreed to pay her five dollars for every article on the Cotton Centennial he used in the newspaper. And, because he also held an interest in the London, Ontario *Advertiser,* he commissioned her to write ten articles for that newspaper as well.

Shortly after arriving in New Orleans, Sara also persuaded three American papers, the *Memphis Appeal, Times-Democrat* and *Washington Post,* to buy her reports. By the beginning of January 1889, the *Brantford Expositor* was predicting the intrepid Miss Duncan was "destined to make her mark in the American literary world".

In April she was back in Brantford, triumphant over her victories in the United States. Her elation was short lived. Little more than a month later, her brother Henry died at the age of 22. Sara managed her grief as best she could, concentrating instead on her career. Sometime that spring, she persuaded John Cameron to allow her to write a regular column for the *Globe*. He agreed, providing she write from home. Sara extemporized, and her first column appeared on 23 May 1885, bearing the name "Garth Grafton".

Using a masculine pseudonym was common practice among the women writers and journalists of the late nineteenth century. As they were all too painfully aware, female writers were often subjected to harsher scrutiny than their male counterparts. To offset this disadvantage, they resorted to masculine or asexual pen names, although the fact that they generally were assigned to write on social or women's subjects tipped off most readers.

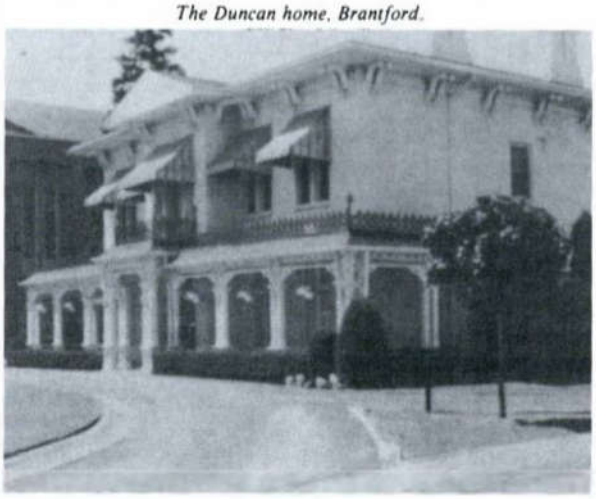
Sara's column, "Other People and I" was wittily composed, dealing with a variety of every day topics in charmingly incisive prose. She increased her income while expanding her journalistic horizons by selling reprint rights to the *Memphis Daily Appeal* and the *Washington Post*. The tactic yielded an unexpected benefit: by October, she was on her way to Washington to take up a job as editorial writer for the newspaper the *Brantford Expositor* described as "the leading society journal of the American capital."

Sara would never be one to rest on her laurels. Almost as soon as she achieved one goal, she was looking about for another. Thus she moved restlessly from one newspaper post to the next. Before she embarked on her world tour, she would move back to Canada where she would write for the *Globe*, the *Montreal Star,* and serve as parliamentary correspondent, the second woman, after *québécoise* Robertine Barry, to do so.

In many ways, she was caught between two worlds. On the one hand, she looked forward to a brave new world when "a conscientious married person will be able to bring up her children, and vote, and cultivate the true and beautiful, and walk in the fear of the Lord and not of the cook." *(Globe,* 10 June 1885). She criticized the restricted role of women in Victorian society. At the same time, though, she conformed to society's expectations of respectable womanhood. Attractive, always well-dressed, she was trained in all the social graces so essential to women in the Victorian middle and upper classes. And, though she might parody high society in her columns, she did so from the inside, as one of those privileged to rub shoulders with the highest in the land.

As a parliamentary reporter, she had met Governor-General Lord Lansdowne, who was posted to India following his term in Canada. When Sara and Lilly Lewis reached India, she renewed her acquaintance with Lansdowne and his wife, and was invited to an evening party at the viceregal palace. There she met Everard Charles Cotes, a 26-year-old Englishman who had been in India for four years as assistant to the Superintendent of Calcutta's Indian Museum.

The Duncan home, Brantford.



In spite of the attraction between them, Sara carried on with a planned visit to the Taj Mahal in Agra. She waited until nightfall, and in the glow of starlight, visited the monument to undying love. Everard was waiting for her and asked her to marry him. She agreed, and when she reached England later that spring, went to call on his family in Oxfordshire.

But personal concerns took up only a small portion of Sara's time in England. She also approached Alfred Gibbons, editor of the *Lady's Pictorial*, a popular British magazine, with copies of her newspaper articles on the world's tour. Gibbons was sufficiently impressed to use them as a serial, "A Social Departure", and the response to Sara's work was strong enough to warrant publication in book form. In February 1890, Sara received an advance against royalties from the publisher, Chatto and Windus. It was the first major step to her career as a novelist.

Two more books in a similar vein followed. *Two Girls on a Barge* detailed her adventures travelling by barge on English canals, while *An American Girl* was based on sightseeing tours in London. Sara's gift for vivid description and slightly sarcastic humour found a ready audience on both sides of the Atlantic.

The months immediately following Sara's world tour were the high point of her life. *A Social Departure* was a marvelous success. "The most charming book of travels it has been our good fortune to come across", the *Pall Mall Budget* called it. She made acquaintances in London's literary circles, and was presented at court. It appeared her high ambitions had been realized — not only was she well on her way to becoming a famous literary figure, she had also found a husband, disproving the popular notion that women could not combine a career and marriage. With her engagement to Evey and the publication of her first book, Sara looked forward to a bright future of love, fame and fortune.

Bright futures rarely remain untarnished. Sara's marriage, which took place in India on 6 December 1890, proved to be an unhappy one. As her biographer, Marion Fowler suggests, Sara's creative soul withered under the hot India sun and the rigid colonial social structure. Change had always been the most important factor in her personal and professional life, and while India at first appealed to her writer's eyes with its exotic culture and its riotous colours, she soon found both oppressive. Equally oppressive was the stratified class system the British had carefully transplanted and maintained in Indian soil. Although Sara found considerable material for her books, which included some incisive portraits of life in colonial India, she was often frustrated. Sometimes, it seemed the sole purpose for writing was to make enough money to finance a welcome respite from the Indian climate. Throughout her career, she made many trips to London, the literary capital of the English world, and back home to Brantford.

Collection of Mrs. Wilma Duncan

Sara dressed for court, 1890.

As one of the best-selling novelists of the era, Sara's whereabouts were carefully noted, and she was frequently interviewed. She also received her share of special recognition: when she visited Canada in late 1903, for example, she was the guest of honour at a reception hosted by the Canadian Society of Authors.

By this time, Sara was immersed in writing *The Imperialist*, which would appear in 1904. Unlike her other books, the novel was set in Canada, providing a vivid and accurate depiction of life in a small Ontario town. Today, the book is considered her best work, but when it was released it was panned by British, American and Canadian critics. Sara, who had never before experienced the bitterness of negative reviews, was crushed. In future, she would avoid Canadian themes altogether.

The year after the publication of *The Imperialist*, Sara wrote her first play. Although she was not a good playwright, her reputation as a novelist resulted in the production of several of her plays, and she earned more than enough money to keep herself in comfort for many years.

Epitaph for a wandering Canadian: "This leaf was blown far"

Metropolitan Toronto Library

Sara Jeanette Cotes, 1901.

During the First World War, Sara remained in London while her husband continued to work in India. In 1919, the couple were part of the entourage accompanying the Prince of Wales on his Canadian tour — Sara's husband, who had launched a journalistic career at her suggestion, was reporting on the event. This was the last time Sara would visit Canada.

Sara at the end of her life.

Metropolitan Toronto Library

In the spring of 1922, she and Evey settled in England, in a small house in Ashstead, Surrey. There, Sara intended to occupy her time writing and gardening, and caring for her failing health. But the respiratory ailments which had bothered her most of her life flared up. In June, she developed pneumonia, and she died on 22 July.

She was buried in the churchyard of St. Giles, in a lead-lined coffin so that her body could eventually be sent to Canada. After travelling over the world, seeing its many wonders, and writing about many of them, Sara had come to realize that her roots, and her heart, would always be Canadian. Yet her one attempt to portray the Canada she had known was considered a failure, and her own wish for a final resting place in the land of her birth never materialized. Her remains still lie in an English countryside, under a simple stone bearing the telling phrase "This leaf was blown far". ♦

Freelance writer Cheryl MacDonald of Nanticoke, Ontario, has written a biography of opera star Emma Albani.

To The North Pole From York Factory

Col. W.H. Gilder's Last Expedition To the Canadian Arctic, 1886-1887

By WILLIAM BARR

The name of Colonel William H. Gilder is usually associated with two particular arctic expeditions. In 1878-80, as a correspondent for the *New York Herald*, he was a member of Lieutenant Frederick Schwatka's small expedition in search of remains or records of the missing Franklin expedition on King William Island. Having travelled by whaling ship to Depot Island, north of Chesterfield Inlet on the northwest shore of Hudson Bay, the small party took the time and effort to adjust to the lifestyle and travelling techniques of the Inuit, then sledged overland to King William Island in the spring of 1879.

Having carefully searched the south and west coasts of that island and having found numerous skeletal and other remains which had not been spotted by Captain Leopold McClintock during his search of the island 20 years previously, as well as a message left by McClintock; Schwatka, Gilder and their companions sledged back to Depot Island during the depths of the winter of 1879-80. They thus accomplished what is generally thought of as the longest sledge trip achieved by whites up to that time (totalling some 5,000 km) without fatalities, illness or even serious frostbite.

In July of the following year, again as a correspondent for the *New York Herald*, Gilder sailed aboard the USS *Rodgers*, commanded by Lieutenant Robert M. Berry, in search of Commander George W. De Long's *Jeannette* which had disappeared in 1879 in an attempt at reaching the North Pole via Bering Strait. After a brief sortie into the Chukchi Sea, during which landings were made on both Herald and Wrangel islands and the coasts of both were searched unsuccessfully for traces of the missing expedition, the *Rodgers* retired to winter quarters in St. Lawrence Bay on the Siberian side of Bering Strait. Shortly afterwards, the *Rodgers* accidentally caught fire and burned, fortunately without loss of life. The members of her crew were billeted among the Chukchi camps up and down the coast. On 7 January 1882 Lieutenant Berry dispatched Gilder westwards by dog sledge to the nearest telegraph station (at Irkutsk) to bring news of the expedition's predicament to the U.S. authorities. Gilder accomplished this mission by 18 April, having even made a side-trip north to the Lena Delta from Yakutsk to help in the search for the missing members of the *Jeannette*'s crew, who by then were known to have landed in the delta in the fall of 1881. Gilder continued his journey west to St. Petersburg, and then returned to the United States.

Clearly, therefore, Gilder was a man of considerable experience of sledge travel, who was perfectly familiar with arctic conditions at all times of year. In the light of these facts Colonel William H. Gilder's third expedition, which in contrast to his earlier two enterprises

is almost totally unknown, even in Manitoba where the events occurred, at first sight seems rather bizarre. The objective of the expedition was to reach the North Pole and, incredible as it may seem, Gilder's starting point was Winnipeg.

Winnipeg was not his initial choice of starting point, however, but was reached as a result of a rather strange sequence of changes of plan, largely beyond his control. And there was even a certain rationale behind the decision to jump off from such a southerly base.

Gilder's plan centered on two focal ideas. One was that he ought to be able to take advantage of a substantial depot of food (over one year's supplies for 25 men) left by Lieutenant Adolphus W. Greely when he abandoned his base at Fort Conger in northern Ellesmere Island in August 1883, to begin the retreat which would end in starvation and death for most of his men at Cape Sabine on Pim Island. The other central part of Gilder's plan was that he would adopt Inuit lifestyle and travel techniques and recruit one or more groups of Inuit, with dog sledges, as Schwatka's expedition had done with such complete success on its journey to King William Island.

Initially, under the sponsorship of the *New York Herald*, Gilder had made arrangements for himself and a companion, William R. Griffiths, to sail from New London, Connecticut, aboard the whaling schooner *Era*, owned by C. A. Williams and Co. and commanded by Captain John O. Spicer, for Kekerten in Cumberland Sound on 14 July 1886. Having recruited a party from the local Inuit his plan was then to be dropped off by Captain Spicer at some point in southern Greenland. From there he hoped to travel north the following year aboard one of the Scottish whalers to Melville Bugt, the Carey Islands, or Smith Sound. From there he would sledge northwards to Fort Conger, in preparation for the final dash to the Pole.

Gilder had received considerable donations in both cash and kind. Mr. Griffiths had contributed $1,000 out of his own pocket. Donations in kind ranged from three rifles and 2,000 rounds of ammunition contributed by the Winchester Repeating Arms Company to fireworks to celebrate the discovery of the North Pole, donated by the Unexcelled Fireworks Company.

But there now occurred a hitch in Gilder's plans which nobody had anticipated, least of all the Colonel, and which was reported at length by the rival *New York Times* but not by the *Herald*. Two days before the sailing date he was arrested on a warrant issued by Justice Smith of New York on complaint of Miss Dollie Adams, described in the *Times* report of the incident as a professional swimmer, who charged him with the larceny of a bond worth $1,000 issued by the Metropolitan Elevated Railroad. The pros and cons of the charge are not relevant to the story; what is relevant, however is that Mr. Justice Smith asked Colonel

Dartmouth College Library

Colonel W.H. Gilder.

Gilder to post $1,500 bail; since there was no bondsman present he was imprisoned in Jefferson Market prison until he could raise the required sum. It was not until 3:00 p.m. on the afternoon of 14 July that Commissioner N. Taintor posted bail and Colonel Gilder was released. Unfortunately the *Era* had sailed from New London as scheduled that morning. According to Colonel Gilder, Miss Adams' intention had simply been to annoy and embarrass him. In a later story in the *Montreal Star* it was suggested that Miss Adams and Colonel Gilder were well known to each other and that her intent had simply been to keep him at home.

If that was indeed her plan it misfired. The irrepressible explorer simply adjusted his plans. Captain Spicer of the *Era* had suggested that he defer his trip until May of 1887, then sail north aboard one of the Scottish whalers which usually called at St. John's, Newfoundland, after completing an early sealing voyage on their way to start whaling in Baffin Bay. Thereby he could reach the general area of Cape Sabine with considerably less effort than he had originally planned. But Gilder apparently felt he could not sit idle for the entire winter.

Once again sponsored by Mr. J. Gordon Bennett, owner of the *New York Herald*, and accompanied by

Griffiths he left New York by train for Montreal at 6:30 p.m. on 21 August 1886. The reporter for the *Montreal Star* described him as follows:

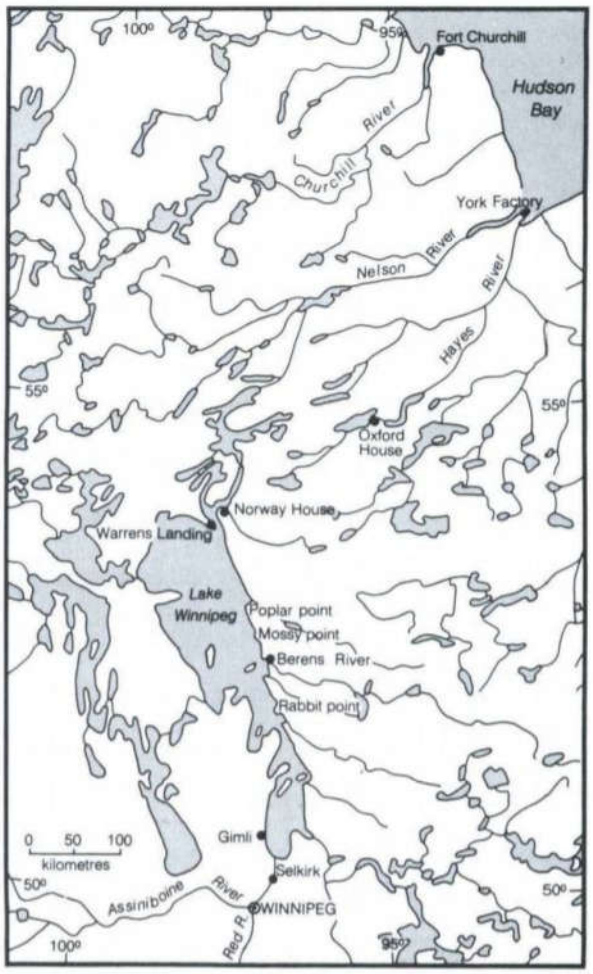
> Rather under, rather than over, medium height, but compactly, broadly and strongly built. He is fair, fat and forty. Wears short red moustache and small side whiskers. Altogether looks more a bon vivant than anything else. Dresses well, and has a partiality for good jewellery. In his talk he is modest, but somehow carries with him a subtle atmosphere of complacency, as of a man conscious of proved strength. A brilliant conversationalist, equipped with a fund of anecdotes, which he relates with humorous zest, even when, as not frequently occurs, the story is against himself.

Gilder and Griffiths reached Winnipeg on 30 August and, from a base at the Leland Hotel, made final preparations for their attempt on the Pole. Gilder planned to travel via the steamer *Princess* from Selkirk north down Lake Winnipeg to Norway House and then via York boat down the normal route via the Hayes River to York Factory. From there he planned to push north to Churchill and by the onset of the winter to have joined the Aivilingmiut whom he had come to know during his journey with Schwatka. Thereafter he would work his way north to Fort Conger, travelling with Inuit groups, and from Fort Conger would finally make a "dash", accompanied by Inuit, for the Pole.

This plan, naturally, depended on gaining, at a minimum, the good will of the Hudson's Bay Company. One suspects that initially Gilder made little progress in this direction. But on 8 September J. Wrigley, Trade Commissioner for the Hudson's Bay Company, received a telegram from Erastus Wyman, a New York businessman, who was apparently helping to fund Gilder's trip, to the effect that "I will take it as a great personal favor if you will give him [Gilder] a letter to your representatives through such territory as he may journey." On that same date Wrigley wrote a letter to all Company officers asking them to extend to Colonel Gilder "information, advice and courtesy".

During his ten days in Winnipeg Gilder made quite an impression on many Winnipeg residents and certainly on a reporter for the *Manitoba Daily Free Press* who referred to the "radical change on this subject of polar exploration which has taken place in the minds of many men here. Two weeks ago the explorer was regarded as a 'fool on a fool's errand', but the genial colonel has dispelled that impression while here, and has created a widespread belief that if anyone can reach the Pole he is the man. His confidence in his ability to do this is extreme, and he has every hope of coming back in a year or so with a chip off the Pole in his pocket."

Gilder particularly endeared himself to a large segment of the Winnipeg population when in a newspaper interview published in the *Free Press* on 2 September he stated categorically: "My experience is that the Hudson's Bay route is a practicable commercial one, and I believe that it is but little more difficult to navigate then the St. Lawrence." This pronouncement was made on the basis of his experience of summer conditions in Hudson Strait and the northern part of Hudson Bay, inbound to Depot Island in July 1878 and outward bound again in August 1880. On the basis of this experience and presumably of conversations with whalers and Inuit, Gilder concluded that the main body of Hudson Bay was ice-free year-round and that not even Hudson Straits "were ever completely frozen over. The ice gathers in masses along the northern or southern shores during the cold period of the year but a steamer sailing along the face of the pack would always, I believe, find an opening to the bay." This, of course, was precisely what promoters of a Hudson Bay railway wanted to hear.



The reporter from the rival *Daily Manitoban* was not so favourably impressed. Writing on 1 September,

he reported that Gilder "has taken with him to the North Pole a large and very powerful organette. If he ever finds the Pole he will play 'Sweet little buttercup' as he rests on top of it." Although the tone of this remark is a little jaundiced, the content is accurate. When Colonel Gilder and Mr. Griffiths left Winnipeg by train for Selkirk on the evening of 10 September their outfit, which totalled 1.5 tonnes, did indeed include a hand organ. However it also included two specially made sledges 5.4 m long and 1.2 m wide, made entirely of wood after a Siberian pattern and fastened entirely with withies. Presumably Colonel Gilder had had them made from designs he had encountered on his trans-Siberian trip. The bulk of the outfit consisted of hardtack, pemmican, guns, ammunition, scientific instruments and "baubles for the natives". Gilder's plan was to live off the land as far as possible, as he had learned to do with such success on the Schwatka expedition.

The two men sailed from Selkirk aboard the steamer *Princess* on 11 September. Almost immediately, however, Gilder ran into a hitch. On this, her last trip of the season, *Princess* ended her run at Warren's Landing. From Warren's Landing the North Pole party was forced to shift for itself. By good fortune, however, as is reported in the post journal of the Hudson's Bay Company's Norway House, on the 13th "two boats under Abel Fraser left [Norway House] for Warren's Landing to take up the buoys and bring home a load of hay while there." Grasping the opportunity Gilder begged a lift and on the morning of 18 September arrived at Norway House aboard one of the returning hay boats.

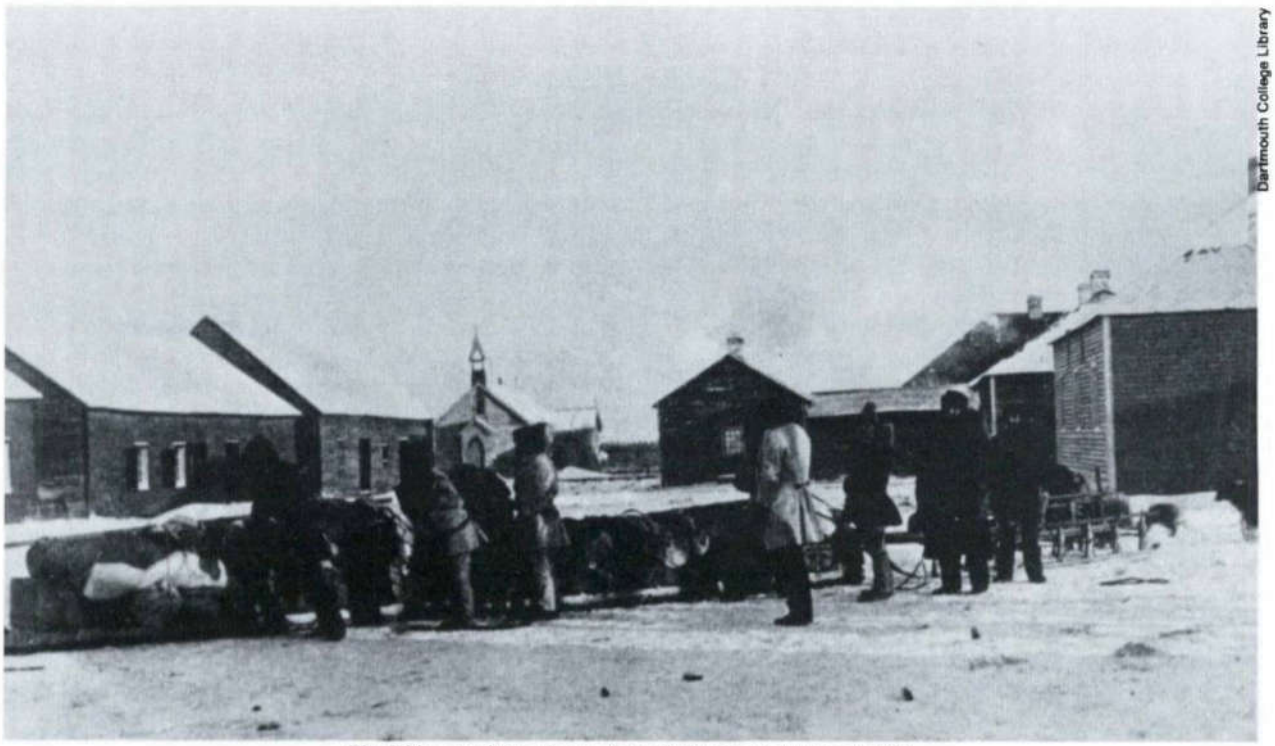
After dinner on 20 September the two men embarked on the next leg of their journey via York boat, bound for Oxford House and York Factory. Cuthbert Sinclair, chief trader at Oxford House, recorded their arrival at his post on 27 September, but by now winter had started in earnest. Sinclair noted that "Colonel Gilder's barometer [*sic*] shows 30° frost; it has been snowing all day." Clearly travel by water would not be feasible for very much longer. Nonetheless Mr. Sinclair sent out men to recruit a boat's crew to take Gilder and Griffiths north to York Factory; this was no easy task since the Indians had already dispersed to their trapping areas. Finally, on 3 October Gilder and Griffiths started north by boat for York Factory.

But in attempting to travel by river so late in the season Gilder was tempting fate. It was not until 28 October that Mr. Murdoch Matheson, chief trader at York Factory, heard from some Indians newly arrived from Oxford House of "2 gentleman coming down, but for what purpose I am ignorant". When Gilder and Griffiths arrived next day (by dog sledge) they revealed that their boat had been caught by freeze-up over 100 miles up the Hill River; they had been forced to cache their outfit there until enough sledges and manpower could be recruited to haul it north to York Factory.

In fact it was not until 6 November that Gilder and a party of eight Indians started back south to retrieve his outfit, and not until the 27th that he was back at York Factory, his outfit complete and ready to start for Churchill and points north. We are provided with an interesting glimpse of Gilder during this sojourn in the closed society of York Factory, through the eyes of Reverend G. Winter, the representative of the Church Missionary Society. Writing to his superior in Winnipeg in March 1888 he commented: "Yet notwithstanding his atheistic opinions I found him in every respect a gentleman of refined taste, and one who would not conceal the truth from his fellow man." Clearly, however, the Reverend Winter found Gilder's aversion to regular church attendance a great disappointment: "As soon as he arrived and was settled down I invited him to attend one service and lent him a prayer and hymn book. He came once only, and my poor Indians were fairly puzzled to know why an English Christian, as they considered him, neglected the House of Prayer."

From the correspondence between Murdoch Matheson and both the Fur Trade Commissioner J. Wrigley and W. Clark, head of the Northern Department Office in Winnipeg, it is clear that Gilder had failed to clarify financial arrangements with either of these gentlemen prior to leaving Winnipeg. Gilder and Griffiths were each charged 20/- per week for board and by mid-December this, plus charges for the hire of Indians, sledges, etc. had amounted to a bill of $773.31 for which Matheson forwarded Gilder's cheque to Winnipeg, although clearly with some doubts as to Gilder's financial reliability. To Wrigley he wrote: "I should have felt easier in sanctioning the payments of such [the Indians who were working for Gilder] had you informed as to whether or not his guarantee for repayment was good." And to Clark: "I trust there will be no difficulty about receiving payment for the outlay on this account."

From remarks in his diary, starting from 4 January 1887, it is abundantly clear that Gilder found Matheson uncooperative — even obstructive, and generally obnoxious. For example on 4 January he reported that an old Indian woman tried to sell him two rabbit-skin caps; Matheson, acting as interpreter, said she wanted 1 lb. of tea and 2 lbs. of sugar for each. Subsequently, allowing a Mr. Crowe to interpret for him, Gilder found that she was asking only 8 oz. of tea and 1 lb. of sugar for both. Gilder perhaps would not have found this so surprising had he known the content of the letter which Matheson had given him to deliver to Mr. Keith Spencer, Chief Trader at Churchill. Requesting that Spencer give "any assistance you can to Col. Gilder", he directed him to charge a mark-up of 100% on any imported


Dartmouth College Library

The Gilder expedition about to leave York Factory, 4 January 1887.

goods and 100% on any country-made goods or produce. While it should be noted that these were not unusually high mark-ups at remote Hudson's Bay Company posts, it should also be recognized that Matheson had inflated the old woman's asking price for her rabbit-skin caps by 300%.

Matheson's reputation was generally not a very pleasant one. In charge of York Factory during a period of retrenchment which saw it decline from the depot of the Northern Department of the Hudson's Bay Company to little more than a run-of-the-mill trading post, Matheson was under orders to make every effort to balance the books. To this end he ruthlessly encouraged the Indians who had been employed by the Company year-round at York Factory for decades to return to a trapping and hunting economy in the bush for the greater part of the year. Since game in the area was seriously depleted the result was serious deprivation, starvation and death for many of the Indians. During this same period Chief John, leader of the York Factory Indians sent a petition to Commissioner Wrigley complaining of Matheson's treatment; repeatedly in his letters to Matheson, Wrigley instructs him to be more sympathetic in his dealings with the Indians, pointing out that it is possible to be both congenial and firm at the same time.

Gilder had apparently planned to use dogs to haul his sledges on the first leg of the trip to Churchill, but Matheson told him that it was impossible to procure dogs; later Gilder found that this was patently false. Hence he was forced to hire 10 Indians to haul his sledges on the first leg of his trip north. His plan from there, as outlined in the letter which Matheson sent with him for Mr. Spencer at Churchill, was to make contact with the northern Inuit, whom he hoped to find trading at Churchill and to return north with them to the Marble Island area. Griffiths, meanwhile, would remair at Churchill, to travel north by boat with most of the supplies the following summer.

From the Marble Island area Gilder apparently still planned to sledge north via Melville Peninsula and across Baffin and Devon islands, bound for Fort Conger. On 23 November 1886 his brother, Richard Gilder, editor of *Century Magazine,* had written to David Bruce and Co., a Dundee whaling company, to ask if it would be possible for one of their ships to land supplies for Colonel Gilder at Cape Isabella or Cape Sabine, i.e. in the Smith Sound area. On the advice of his captains Mr. David Bruce replied on 22 December that his ships seldom went farther north than the Carey Islands, usually reaching the west side (of Baffin Bay) about Coburg Island in the mouth of Jones Sound. Hence he would be prepared to arrange for his ship *Esquimaux,* under Captain Milne, to take a cache of supplies north from St. John's to Coburg Island or Cape Horsburgh (Devon Island), and even to leave

mail for Colonel Gilder at Pond Inlet. How word about these arrangements was to be relayed to Colonel Gilder, however, remains a mystery.

At 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, 4 January, with the thermometer recording −35°F, the four sledges of the *New York Herald* Polar Expedition were lined up at York Factory for Gilder to take a photograph of the scene. Then, with the Indians leaning into their hauling belts the sledges headed out through the gates of the stockade and west across the peninsula to the Nelson estuary. The goal that night was a cabin at a wood-cutting camp on the banks of the Nelson, but half a mile before it two of the sledges suffered some damage. Next day was spent in repairing the sledges; Gilder remarked in his diary, "If I had known of this house I could have been living here instead of at the Fort. Could have been happy and set fox traps."

On the morning of the 6th the party got under way at 11:15, "and soon reached the river after a hard pull through the willows". After covering some distance at a run on superbly smooth ice along the south side of the estuary, the sledges struck out for the north shore. The ice was quite rough in places and there was some open water to be avoided; the crossing took three hours and 40 minutes. One sledge (presumably damaged) had to be temporarily abandoned on the ice. It was retrieved by five of the men next morning and then the runners of all the sledges had to be remudded before the party got under way, inevitably delayed, at 1:45 p.m. They stopped for the night at 3:45 at Cook's Creek.

The following morning (January 8) Gilder walked ahead with his shotgun to look for ptarmigan. When the sledges caught up with him they were moving fast with a following wind; one sledge even had a blanket hoisted as a sail. Subsequently, however, they encountered areas where slush had formed on the salt water ice, reducing progress markedly; to avoid this problem, and to be closer to the trees for shelter and fuel, around 4:00 p.m. the party turned up a little creek to gain access to an inland route parallel to the coast. The creek was very stony and the mud was worn off all the sledge runners, to the extent that one had to be left temporarily in the creek, to be retrieved once camp was made. One consolation was that Kyack, one of the Indians, shot two ptarmigan with one shot. Gilder remarked: "The country seems to be filled with these birds but they are only out before sunrise, then enter the willows and afterwards hide in the snow till noon when they again come out for a short time, then retire till sundown."

Sunday, 9 January was a rest day since there was a strong headwind and the sledge runners had to be remudded. Gilder took the opportunity to hunt ptarmigan and also to make some less than charitable remarks about his assistant W. R. Griffiths:

> My valuable assistant burnt the soles off of his shoes last night and said it must have been the rocks that did it. Doesn't seem to know even a fire from a rock . . . My asst. has a habit of standing before a fire and swaying backward and forward as if just about to fall. It is always a wonder how he manages to stand up anyhow for his toes turn up.

Next morning, with the thermometer at −40°F, the sledges advanced only 3 miles to an Indian trapper's cabin. Before starting Gilder shot 4 ptarmigan and a "pheasant" which they ate for dinner. After overtaking the sledges he tried walking on snowshoes for the first time "and wore them for several miles and as easily as if accustomed to them".

The following morning (11 January) Gilder was startled at the announcement by Joseph, leader of the Indian sledge-haulers, that at the present slow rate of progress, caused by a shortage of snow, it would take them five weeks to reach Churchill. On this basis Gilder decided to cache the heavy goods at Goose House, about 20 miles farther on. Griffiths would then continue north to Churchill with 7 men, travelling light. Meanwhile Gilder would turn back immediately with 3 men, heading back to New York to regroup. Hence this camp, only a few tens of miles, at most, north of the Nelson River, was the most northerly latitude reached by Gilder in his attempt at the North Pole.

A little after noon next day camp was struck and the two parties separated, Griffiths with 3 sledges and 7 men continuing north to Churchill, Gilder with one sledge and 3 men returning to York Factory. Before parting Joseph, at his own suggestion, handed Gilder a note signed by all the Indians to the effect that Matheson had been a hindrance rather than a help to Gilder. William, another of the Indians, gave Gilder a fine cross fox skin as payment against a "mechanical musical instrument" which he wanted Gilder to buy for him and ship north. Presumably this was in response to seeing the hand organ which formed part of Gilder's baggage.

Gilder and his small group covered over 21 miles back to the previous campsite at Cook's Creek. They all got wet feet while crossing the creek since the ice had become flooded due to the spring tide, and the final leg of the trip along the shore in the darkness, was far from pleasant. Gilder gave each man a drink of brandy that night — a gesture which was much appreciated. Next afternoon it took them three hours to cross the Nelson estuary. Reaching the wood-cutting camp again at 5:00 p.m. they camped there for the night, reaching York Factory on the morning of Friday 14 January.

At noon on Monday 17 January Gilder started south with four men and three sleds. Murdoch Matheson's behaviour was quite in character: he was "furious tho quiet" when Gilder refused to buy a sledge from him

but bought one instead from one of the Company servants for half the price, namely $5. On the Saturday Matheson had "swaggered around . . . and said he did not know they [the Company] would ever be paid their bills against me but if not they would 'put me in jail in Winnipeg' ".

On the second day out Gilder was overtaken by Chief John of the York Factory band during the midday tea stop, and he kept company with Gilder's party for a day. James (one of the Indians) shot nine ptarmigan that day. On the following morning (Wednesday, 19 January) the temperature was −48°F and the overnight minimum −53°F. Gilder parted company with Chief John that day and assured him that he would relay his thanks to Commissioner J. Wrigley "and say that what the Indians most wanted was someone to come and find out exactly the state of affairs between them and Mr. Matheson".

Soon after the party camped that night two Indians, Sandy and Joseph, arrived from the south with the "packet" (the mail). It included four letters for Gilder; unfortunately one was a letter from Mr. J. Gordon Bennett, complaining about the bills forwarded to him for Gilder's expenses at Norway and Oxford houses on his way north in the fall. Gilder appears to have been quite indignant: "This is the heaviest blow of all. I did think Mr. B. would see me through with my necessary expenses. Can now only get home and make terms with the world." Of more immediate concern was the report by Sandy and Joseph that the going ahead was bad and that the Indians along the way were short of food, and that hence no help could be expected from them.

The temperature next morning (20 January) was −50°F; the overnight low had been −55°F. After covering a short distance the party stopped and Gilder jettisoned about 100 lbs. of his load. He also gave away (to whom is not clear) "my peajacket, Norfolk ditto, red blanket, 1 shirt, 1 pr. trousers, 1 shawl, 1 pr. moose skin shoes," and burned a lot of papers and letters. The reason for the latter action is also unclear. On the following day the weather was quite warm: at 11:00 a.m. it was −32°F and at noon the thermometer, lying in the load on the sledge was even recording −17°F. Numerous fresh caribou tracks were seen and around noon Gilder set off to track some caribou "but only got very wet from perspiration". On the 22nd the party "crossed Perry Cutaway during the p.m. at a very picturesque point. The prettiest place I have seen this winter." There were again numerous caribou and wolf tracks but no sign of the animals themselves. By this stage there was real concern about the food reserves lasting. On the 23rd, the party covered only about 11 miles: "At the rate we will get left without food before we get in to Oxford." Hence it must have been quite a relief next day when one of the Indians, David Sinclair, shot eight ptarmigan with only two cartridges. Although the temperature in the morning was relatively high (−42°F) it barely warmed up at all during the day, reaching only −38° at noon, and dropped to −48°F in the afternoon. This cold weather persisted for several days and made travel very unpleasant; thus on the 25th it was −43°F at 10:00 a.m. That day the party crossed the Fox River a little after noon; one of the Indians called at a trapper's camp, and although the trapper was away the women gave him enough whitefish for two good meals. Since from here there was "a road abt. 15 feet wide cut right through in a straight line to Oxford" progress from now on was relatively easy.

But the problems were still not over:

> **Friday, Jan. 28.** A day of disasters. First it snowed during the night and until about 3:30 p.m. when the wind shifted from SE to SW and the sunset clear. 2nd disaster I broke my little bottle with all my brandy (a 4 oz. vial marked "Poison. Intensifying solution") and wet my clothes and this book and lost my brandy. Then we only made about 8 or 9 miles and had a fruitless 3 hours' chase after deer and David Sinclair shot a stick in the burnt woods and saved the deer. Little David killed a rabbit which we had for dinner.

The following day, the 29th was even worse, if that is possible:

> . . . Got off at 9 a.m. and the wind strong from SW, that is, in our faces. All night a heavy frozen dew fell and wet everything. This increased during the day to a hard snow storm that is still going on. Reached Deer Lake at 11:20 and the tent where people dwell at noon. Found them in a most miserable condition and out on the lake wrapped in rabbit-skin robes and fishing without luck. We had a very light breakfast, the men only fish, tea and bread and I tea and bread alone. They had fish and pork last night in small quantity and made a sort of chowder of it but I have eaten nothing solid since yesterday morning. Hope the people at the other end of the lake are better off. If not, we will have pretty good appetites before we reach Oxford. I have that haunch of reindeer meat for Gran and still hope to get through with it. If I reach Oxford with it it will be safe but I greatly fear. Ther. a.m. −24°; min. −38°; noon −14°; p.m. −9°. Made abt. 11 miles.

> **Sunday, Jan. 30.** The culmination of all my ill luck seemed to have arrived last night when the men said we still had a long road before us with no prospect of assistance from the natives en route, that there was but one more family and that at the other end of the lake. They were so poor that the packeters had to feed them instead of getting food from them. The men therefore could not take anything but a

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One of Gilder's camps on the trail.

light load of blankets and get to Oxford before we starved by making forced marches. It seemed as if a demon was pursuing me, or like a frightful nightmare, that I could never get anywhere I tried to, with any load that I wanted. I consented to leave the stuff and the men promised to come back for it which could take them 8 days. I managed to bring my photographic camera and sextant and one light fur coat and my rabbit skin robe. Of course I had to sacrifice my haunch of venison and we had a good meal before starting. It snowed all night *"pour combler le malheur."* Ther. a.m. −18°; min −22° and a strong gale all day from N.W. Our course W. Made 16 or 17 miles, halting at night and getting a meal of rabbits from the people we were told had nothing. They said two dog teams left this a.m. for Oxford and were to pick Mr. Campbell up halfway, who had twice started to come here but never succeeded. The family live in a nice log house for all the world like a Siberian *povarnia* and seemed to have plenty of rabbits at any rate. Ther. at night −30° and blowing hard from N.W.

Monday, Jan. 31. Ther. a.m. −42°; min. −44°; 3 p.m. −22°. Got away after pleasant night's rest at 7:35 and by 6 p.m. had made 23 or 24 miles and reached some other natives, who lived in teepees made of poles. Gave us a good supper of white fish and tea. The man whom we left this a.m. gave us 5 lbs. of flour and I found a dead rabbit on the road which had apparently dropped off one of the sleds that passed over the road the day before. Of course both times when we stopped for a drink of tea they [i.e. the Indians] had to make bread also, trusting to luck for anything more to eat during the two days it will take us to reach Oxford. It turned out all right, I suppose, and my things could just as well have come along with us as not, but they would not take *that* risk of course. Came a good part of the way at the rate of 3½ miles per hour and my back seems to suffer therefrom. Ther. night −48°.

Tuesday, Feb. 1. Ther. a.m. −60°; min −63°. Perfectly still and bitterly cold. The 2 men in the tent where we slept last night came for Oxford with us and hitched up 3 dogs but 2 more followed so they put one more in harness and when we came to the lakes en route gave me a lift. The first 2 were small and gave me less than 1½ miles but later in the afternoon we crossed 4 large ones that aggregated 1 hour and made abt. 4 m. on the way. It was my first experience on a flat sled and tho' well enough for a lift would not answer for a long journey, for you must hold on to a rope with both hands, and

over any kind of rough place will get upset easily. We left the tent at 9 a.m. and camped at 6:30 having done 23 or 24 miles. My clothes were sometimes wet with perspiration and sometimes frozen stiff. When I unbuttoned my undercoat in camp it was full of snow or rime from frozen perspiration. There was no friendly smoke curling up in the distance tonight like last night. None but those who have travelled in the cold north can understand the cheerful look of welcome a smoke rising among the trees in front of you over the frozen wastes has for the weary traveller, especially when he sees it abt. the time for camping. It is the same here whether from the comfortable dwellings of the Hudson's Bay Co.'s posts or from the smoky wigwam of the Indian hunter, and in Siberia I noticed the same feeling. I remember as night began to fall how eagerly I used to scan the line of the distant forest for the slightest trace of smoke and the feeling of content and prospective comfort when I saw it, and the bitter disappointment when the thin line of sky through a rift in the forest deceived me into believing that somebody's home was nearby, and that there was a good fire and perhaps a good supper to which I would be as heartily welcome as one could possibly be, for it seems as if the stranger was more warmly and thoroughly welcome in the coldest lands.

The dog sled took all my traps from the other 2 sleds and yet the men complained that they were heavy. It seems impossible to suit them. It was cold during the early part of the day but the ther. rose to −22° at 4 p.m. and the sun set in a cloudy sky, so it may not be cold tonight. Ther. p.m. −32°.

Wednesday, Feb. 2nd. Got off at 7:15 and by aid of the good offices of friend Robinson's sled and dog team made 10 m before dinner at 10 a.m. The other sleds did not come up and so we went on after some frozen "hung" fish and reached the friendly shelter of Oxford House abt. 2:30. Was kindly welcomed by Mr. & Mrs. Sinclair who gave me some water for my first wash in 17 days and a good luncheon of rabbit, strawberries and tea with cream and sugar. Made arrangements with Robinson to go for my things and to give him 7 days grub for self and one helper, to pay for dog food and give each 3 sh. sterling per day while gone. How different from Mr. Matheson's methods! Ther. p.m. −18°.

Gilder and his party rested at Oxford House for over a week, enjoying the warm hospitality of Mr. Cuthbert Sinclair and his wife. The welcome which they gave Gilder on this occasion gives some measure of the true courtesy of this couple since Sinclair had received quite a brusque letter from Commissioner Wrigley, dated 13 December, reprimanding him for extending credit to Gilder during his visit while northward bound:

I have heard with some surprise and regret that credit has been given to Colonel Gilder. If you will be good enough to refer to my letter of the 8th September you will see that all the Company's Officers were asked to give was information, advice and courtesy, credit not even being named. I never for one moment supposed it would be given. I am still more surprised that it should be asked as Colonel Gilder especially informed me that he did not require it. Everything shall be done to recover the money but I am afraid it will be a bad debt . . .

On the day after their arrival at Oxford House Robinson started back to pick up the gear which had been jettisoned, while Gilder enjoyed the Sinclairs' hospitality. It was not until Wednesday, 9 February that Robinson returned and not until the morning of the 11th that Gilder, well-fed and thoroughly rested, started south again.

Friday, Feb. 11. Ther. a.m. −36°; p.m. −39°. Clear and pretty strong wind, northwest. Took another batch of photos and got off at 11 with 2 sleds, 3 men and 9 dogs. Mr. Sinclair came down on the lake to see me well off. A difference between him and Matheson. The latter's charges to come to Oxford were $185 and more, and Mr. S.'s for the trip to Norway House $107.75 of which about $35 was for the York men's rations and to get the things left at Deer Lake. Furthermore I have two good dog teams and can jump on a sled once in a while on the lakes. Mrs. S. made some biscuits for my trip, cooked and froze some potatoes, and Mr. S. gave me fresh beef for the road (not canned). Mrs. S. also gave me 2 pairs of beautifully made slippers to take home. I did want to get a 20 lb. trout but they had caught none recently.

We travelled till 7 p.m. making about 24 or 25 miles and stopped for dinner at a house 8 miles from Oxford. This sort of travelling is not bad by any means and I must say I like the idea of stopping in comfortable, warm houses, though I do not despise a good camp in the open air unless it snows or rains or blows and the wind shifts on you. Ther. noon −13°; p.m. −27°.

Next day at a house "near the rapids" where they stopped for lunch they found two dog teams which were also heading south and whose drivers offered to take part of Gilder's load to Norway House. Hence Gilder's party was now travelling in a small cavalcade of four dog teams. For the next few days they made an average 30 miles per day despite cold winds and occasional snow. Gilder found the scenery on 13 February particularly impressive:

. . . we made several portages through magnificent forests of tall pines whose limbs were loaded with snow and were simply sublime. Worth a trip

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Cuthbert Sinclair, post manager at Oxford House.

here to see them. In some places small pine trees were bent down, apparently by the weight of the snow, and then buried beneath their snowy burden, and looked like small, domelike lumps of marble.

On the morning of the 16th the party got up at 3 a.m., and was on the trail by 5:30 on a beautiful, calm morning. Gilder had even washed in anticipation of reaching Norway House.

> And soon got down upon the Nelson River where we saw natives camped, and came along at a lively gait, reaching Norway abt. 11:30. Breakfasted on the way and took two photographs.
>
> Found Mr. MacDonald laid up with a sprained foot and Mr. Christie on his back for two months with inflammatory rheumatism. Ther. a.m. −22°.
>
> **Thursday, Feb. 17.** The men went back to Oxford today and I added to Mr. Sinclair's acct. 1.15 for extra fish and the two additional sleds. Ther. this a.m. −4°; warmer and cloudy later. Made photos of the MacDonald and Flett children. Ther. p.m. +2°.
>
> **Friday, Feb. 18.** Clear and ther. +2°. Took picture of Mr. Macdonald in his sled with his fine team of dogs. I believe they have 2 good teams for me. On the way from Oxford I had some onions and James removed them from the meat bag to the bread bag so that my bread all had the taste of onion, not strong but just a faint suspicion like a Spanish girl's breath.

Leaving Norway House early on the morning of 21 February, Gilder headed south along the east shore of Lake Winnipeg with two heavy dog sledges. He reached Poplar River on the evening of the 23rd and Berens River on the 24th. Some distance north of Berens River he met Alexander McArthur, a Winnipeg businessman and ornithologist "on his way to Churchill and the north by sleds, 2 and very heavy, to trace and study the habits of the wild goose and the musk ox." McArthur also recorded his meeting with Gilder in his diary: "24 February. . . . Fine clear all day. Met E. McDonald, Factor Norway Ho., Angus McKay, Indian Agent B. River & Col. Gilder aftn. ½ way to Mossy Point. Gilder said could get no Esquimaux at Churchill. Meant to come back in open water or go by whaler — looked cold in his Eskimo dress. left Griffiths behind."

In the event McArthur's "arctic expedition" was even less successful than Gilder's; he got only a short distance beyond Norway House before turning back.

After a day's rest at Berens River Gilder continued south on the 26th, reaching Rabbit Point that night:

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Some of the Gilder party at Oxford House.

> I bought 4 splendid white fish at Rabbit Head for 50 cts. and one we cooked for breakfast yesterday was perfectly delicious. I am going to take 3 home and have a feast for the folks in New York with them and a leg of reindeer meat I got from Alex. Macdonald.

Next day the party crossed the lake to Drake's Mills where they began increasingly to encounter signs of civilization: "3 teams of mules were here last night for fish. This is a log hut just like a hotel in the gold diggings for all the world. The boss has a steam sawmill close by." On the 28th they reached an even more densely settled area: "Icelandic settlement commences at White Mud Creek. No survey and can take up what land they want. Good farmers and raise lots of potatoes. Post office at the church. Camped in the woods beyond, 60 miles from Selkirk."

The following day brought even more signs of civilization:

> The road from Gimli, where we stopped at an Icelandic hotel called "Home for travellers" was excellent. At the hotel had coffee (good), some butter and sweet bread with a glass of milk. Passed many ox sleds with single oxen which seemed very large, probably because I was not used to looking up at oxen from beneath.

Gilder and his party reached Selkirk on 3 March and from there he immediately dispatched two telegrams. One, addressed to James Gordon Bennett, read:

> Just arrived from Hudson's Bay after nearly thousand miles on snow shoes and dog sledges. All expeditionary stores north of York Factory ready go forward by boats in spring. Impossible move by sledges this winter owing almost total absence snow on ground. Passed [*sic*] season remarkable for low water in lakes and rivers and lack of snow. Near Berens River, Lake Winnipeg last Thursday, Feb. 24, met Mr. A. MacArthur, naturalist of Winnipeg Historical Society, on way north study habits and haunts wild geese and muskox. He expects reach Fort Churchill this winter and go up in boats from there next spring. Gilder.

The other telegram, to his brother, was an appeal for a hundred dollars for his fare home.

Gilder arrived in Winnipeg on 4 March; he was described by a reporter for the *Manitoba Daily Free Press* as "looking rather washed out and about forty pounds under weight. The colonel will leave for his den in the Herald office in a couple of days." It was in fact 26 April before he got back to New York, where his arrival provoked a sarcastic, tongue-in-cheek article in the rival newspaper the *New York Times:*

> The absence of grocery stores beyond the arctic circle, and the inability of the polar bears to speak English as she is spoke, was partly the cause of his return, the other part being certain business arrangements, a hitch in which demanded his presence here. The walking in Greenland is not all that it might be at present, the cracks in the sidewalk sometimes expanding to the distance of several miles. The ice is also reported as quite cold, and the water unusually wet.

Despite protestations to reporters that he had not abandoned his plans for an attempt at the Pole, Gilder did not go north again. This was probably largely due to the fact that Griffiths had been forced to retreat south from Churchill. As noted in both the journal of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Churchill and in the journal of the Reverend Joseph Lofthouse of the Church Missionary Society, Griffiths with his seven Indian companions had reached Churchill on 30 January, 18 days after Gilder had turned back. Lofthouse, commenting on the plan to reach the North Pole, remarked that "I am very doubtful of the undertaking."

Despite Gilder's plans that Griffiths should remain at Churchill until the following summer, events had conspired against him to make this impossible. On 4 September 1886 the Hudson's Bay Company's supply ship *Cam Owen* under Captain Hawes, inward bound for Churchill, had been wrecked near Cape Churchill. There was no loss of life but her entire cargo was lost and hence the little community at Churchill was drastically short of food during the following winter. Hence on 17 February Griffiths set off for York Factory, accompanied for the first two days by two dog teams. A week later, on the 24th, Murdoch Matheson at York

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Gilder's party on the trail between Oxford House and Norway House, February 1887.

Factory recorded in his journal that "Griffiths the Yankee returned from P [Churchill]", and on 9 March that "Mr. Griffiths of the New York Herald Polar Expedition left with 2 Indians for Oxford House". His arrival there was duly noted in his journal by Cuthbert Sinclair on 19th March and his departure for Norway House on the 21st. In due course he too no doubt reached Winnipeg safely.

The sarcastic comments in the *New York Times* on the occasion of Gilder's return to the city, clearly represent one extreme in terms of an assessment of his attempt at the Pole. Admittedly it is very difficult to understand, or even to take seriously, the decision to launch a polar attempt from York Factory, located at only 57° 5′N, i.e. some 3,700 km from the Pole. This is especially so in light of the fact that Gilder had planned to have depots laid by whaling ships as far north as Cape Sabine or Cape Isabella, at approximately 78° 45′N, and presumably could easily have arranged to be dropped off there himself the following summer. At this distance in time we will probably never know whether Gilder seriously believed his plan for sledging north, travelling and living with the Inuit right to the Pole was truly feasible. Possibly he was simply casting around for an "adventure" on which he could capitalize through articles for the *New York Herald* or through another book.

Whatever Gilder's justification, however, one positive outcome is his record of his return trip from York Factory to Selkirk by dog sledge in the winter of 1887, a trip during which he experienced some extremely bitter weather and, on occasion, some serious food shortages. Not only does his diary cast some very interesting light on travelling conditions, social conditions and the economy of the area at a critical point in its history, but through his excellent photographs Colonel Gilder has left us an extremely valuable contribution to the pictorial record of Northern Manitoba a century ago. ◆

William Barr is Professor of Geography, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon. *He acknowledges the assistance of Dartmouth College Library, Hanover, New Hampshire, where Col. Gilder's diary and photographs are held. He also wishes to thank the Hudson's Bay Company Archives and the Provincial Archives of Manitoba for their assistance. Map by Keith Bigelow and Zofia Wolinski, University of Saskatchewan.*

The Ghost People of Vancouver Island

Did a Shy and Elusive Tribe Haunt the Hidden Depths of the Forest?

By CHARLES LILLARD

Haunting as water-music rising from a mountain stream, the story of an unknown tribe inhabiting the interior of Vancouver Island lingered on, indifferent to exploration.

As the Coast Salish, Nootka, and Kwakiutl mythologies all cast hints about an interior group, the concept of this unknown people did not begin, as might be expected, with the European traders and settlers. What did originate with these men and women, first with the arrival of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1843, then with the colonists after 1849, was a contempt for the Island's interior.

For all their curiosity elsewhere, the HBC showed remarkably little interest in their island surroundings. Forts Rupert, Nanaimo, Victoria all faced east; the west coast was not explored; and not until July 1852 did Hamilton Moffatt the first European-HBC employee cross the Island — a trip via the Nimpkish River to Nootka Sound and return.

Adam Horne, another HBC man, crossed Vancouver Island twice in 1856. During the following four years a number of men made the crossing, with most using the easy route between Nanaimo and the head of Alberni Inlet. During the early 1860s this route became a heavily used thoroughfare once the sawmill complex on the shores of Alberni Inlet began operation in May 1861.

Although the earliest Island crossings were well-intentioned exploratory gestures, their results were of little value. Historically important island exploration did not begin until 1864, and even then exploration was only a secondary consideration.

The Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition, led by Robert Brown and financed by the city of Victoria, went out to find gold. Victoria was then in the throes of her first economic depression, and her city fathers, locked into the gold-rush mentality of that day, could only see a local gold-rush as a solution. It was a far-fetched idea, even a grasping at the proverbial straw, yet amazingly the VIEE did find gold. The discovery was made so close to Victoria it inspired even the most distraught among the nonbelievers.

Unhappily the rush to the Leech River, not far inland from present-day Sooke, lasted less than a year. Largely due to Brown's enthusiasm, the VIEE continued on, almost untouched by the gold-madness developing behind them. During that summer they discovered soon-to-be-important coal and copper deposits, and as they worked upcoast, they gathered information for the first (1866) detailed map of Vancouver Island's southern interior.

Back to Victoria, Brown rushed his official report into print; predictably the document is awkward and self-consciously important. There are, however, moments of value scattered throughout the paper.

"While at Comiaken [Cowichan Bay] I had heard vague rumours of an inland tribe living on the great lake [Cowichan Lake], but the rumour was so semi-fabulous as to excite little attention. Then at Somenos it became more tangible, and we heard the name of the tribe was Masolemuch, and that they spoke a different language from the Cowichans [Halkomelem]."

And then "on the 13th of June, looking at Skutz Falls, Kakalatza [their guide] pointed out, choked with nettles and hemlock on the opposite bank of the river, some old lodge frames. This had been the former village of the Masolemuch in the halcyon days long ago,

View of Sooke Lake, Vancouver Island, by Frederick Whymper, 1876.

when they were prosperous, and the lodges of their people were many, but now they no longer came here."

Later, analyzing what he had learned of these people, Brown came to the conclusion they were relatives of the Nitinat, and naturally enough spoke Nitinat, then considered a Nootkan dialect. Brown then throws in fascinating tidbits of local knowledge. "Che-hunuk, a noted chief of theirs, died last winter, and is buried on an island in the lake. They manufacture many of the finest canoes here. They come to the lake in the fall with their women and children, stay generally all winter, or until they can procure a sufficiency of salmon and dried meat, generally elk, which inhabit the borders [of Cowichan Lake] in great herds."

Robert Brown's guide further told him that the Masolemuch were on friendly terms with the Halkomelem. So close were they that the groups sometimes intermarried.

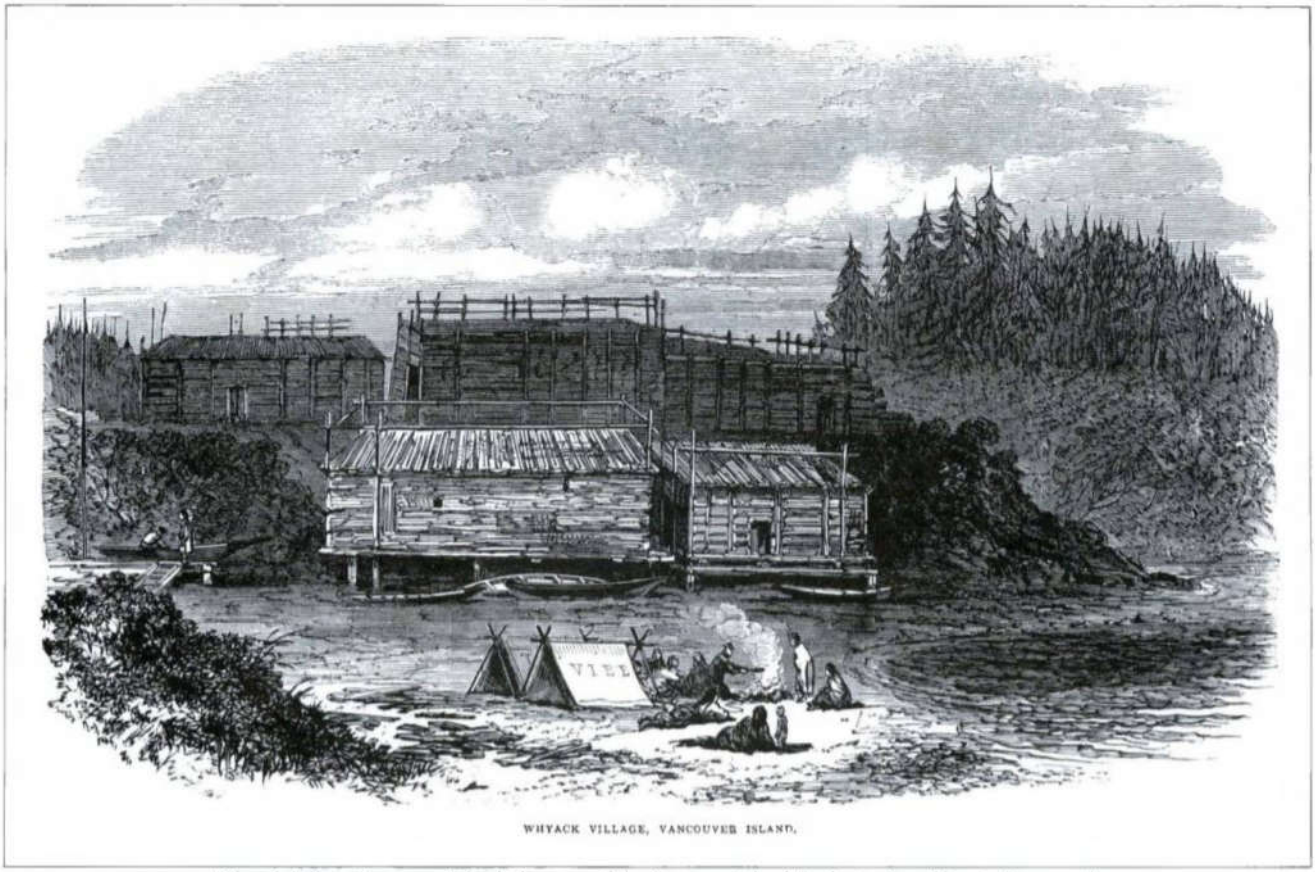
Clearly these mysterious people are the ancestors of the small group who summered at the northern end of Cowichan Lake, and were known by that name, in the years immediately prior to World War I. Today the Nitinat village is on this lake.

The first published account of these Cowichan Lakers is found in *The Journal of the Royal Geographical Society,* 1857. Therein appeared Walter Colquhoun Grant's "Description of Vancouver Island", an interesting piece and a valuable one. In 1849 Grant became the Island's first independent colonist.

"At the back of Barclay [Barkley] Sound," wrote Grant, "on a small river, about two days' journey into the interior, live the only inland tribe whose existence is known of in Vancouver Island. They are called the 'Upatse Satuch,' and consist only of four families, the remainder having been killed by the Nanaimo Indians."

Nothing in the printed record suggests when or where Grant may have learned of these people; nor are there precise details regarding his travels on the Island. In a letter to his cousin, William Brodie, dated 8 August 1851, Grant claims to have crossed the Island ("I have however been across the island in one or two places"), so he may have encountered the Nitinat.

And if Grant actually did make these crossings, not merely a crossing from his homestead at Sooke Harbour to the Strait of Georgia, then he is the first European known to have crossed Vancouver Island.



Whyack Village, Vancouver Island, the camp of the Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition in foreground. Frederick Whymper drawing for the Illustrated London News, 1866.

As Grant left the Island forever sometime prior to December 1853, it is possible that one of his Vancouver Island correspondents mentioned the "Upatse Satuch" to him. Such a possibility should not be overlooked: it explains the difference in tone between his published correspondence and the first piece read before the Royal Geographical Society. That Grant soon lost contact with these correspondents explains the vaporousness of his second RGS piece, "Remarks on Vancouver Island, principally concerning Townsites and Native Population", dated 1859.

Grant's Upatse Satuch, Brown's Masolemuch, and today's Nitinat are one group. The differences in the names of the first two may be due to the different guides. Brown's men were Halkomelem, while Grant's were probably Straits Salish hunters from Sooke Harbour. That this inland group is not mentioned in Gilbert Malcolm Sproat's *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life* (1868) implies there was no longer a mystery surrounding these inlanders by the late 1860s.

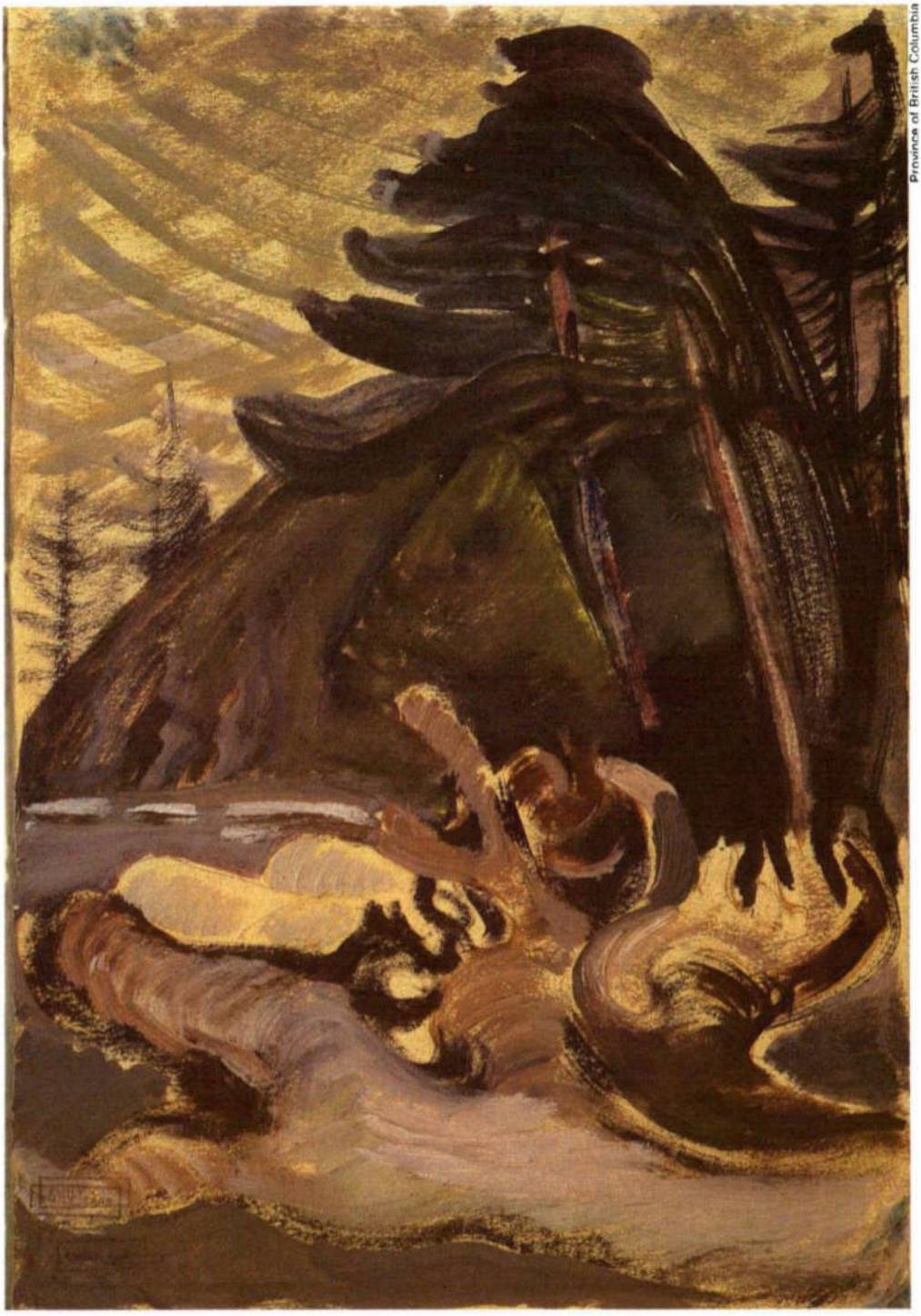
But by no means does this close the file on Vancouver Island's ghost people. Writing in 1883, Hubert Howe Bancroft mentions the "Saukaulutchs", a tribe said to be inhabiting the interior of Vancouver Island.

Initially this statement can be attributed to one of Bancroft's sources: John Keast Lord. In 1866, Lord, one of the first professional naturalists to visit Vancouver Island, wrote: "These Nimpkish [Kwakiutl] Indians speak of another tribe that they call Sau-kaulutuck, who have never seen or traded with white people."

Lord's informant was Hamilton Moffatt, the trader in charge of Fort Rupert, and what he knew about these inland people was extremely limited.

"In crossing over to the west side of the island, on a war-path, the Nimkis [Nimpkish] discovered these Indians by accident, took several of them prisoners, whom they subsequently used as slaves, taking also skins, and what other property they had worth plundering. They are said to live on the edge of a lake, and subsist principally on deer and bear, and such fish as they can take in the lake. They own no canoes, neither do they know the use of firearms, their only weapons being the bow, arrow, and spear."

Earlier and further south Commander Richard C. Mayne crossed the Island twice in May, 1861. His route from the Alberni Mills to Nanaimo, via Cameron Lake, is essentially that used by Highway 4 today.



Twisted Trees and High-Tossed Driftwood.
Emily Carr, oil sketch on paper.

Along with his Indian guides, Mayne had William Banfield for company. Banfield's presence is important for, as the first independent settler on the Island's west coast (circa 1852), and as a coastal trader, the man should have heard tales of these "Sau-kau-lutuck".

However in his first report on this crossing (1862), there is no mention of this group. Yet a year later, and now writing a popular account of his time on Vancouver Island, Mayne quotes extensively from the journal of Hamilton Moffatt — "one of the Hudson Bay Company's officers", who crossed the Island in 1852. Had Mayne heard other stories from Banfield, surely he would have included them at this point.

The story taken from Moffatt's journal, and much abridged here, suggests Lord obtained his information orally, so different are the stories.

"During my walk I was informed of a tribe of Indians living inland, having no canoes and no connection with the coast. These people sometimes descend some of the rivers for the purpose of trade with the Indians of Nootka. The name of the tribe is Saa-kaalituck; they number about 50 to 60 men, and were only discovered a few years back by one of the Nimpkish chiefs, while on a trapping expedition."

According to Moffatt's informants these people had a village on a lake, wore furs, and recently had suffered devastating attacks from the Straits Salish.

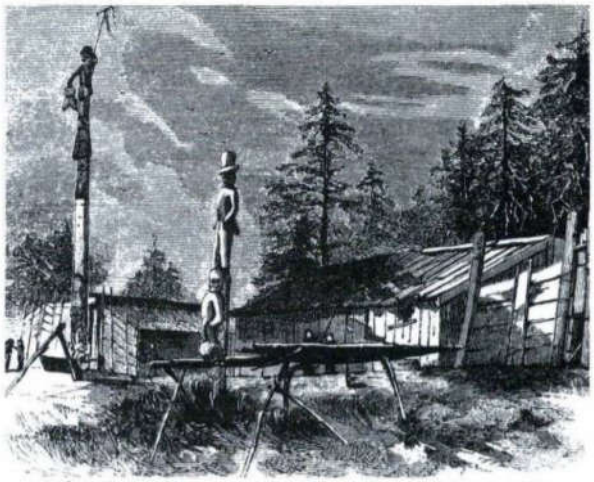
Thus all the information concerning the Saukaulutuchs of Vancouver Island, last mentioned officially by the Geographic Board's *Handbook of the Indians of Canada* (1912), can be traced back to Moffatt and his journal. Entitled "Journal of a Tour across Vancouver Island", this document was printed in the *Appendix* to J. Despard Pemberton's *Facts and Figures Relating To Vancouver Island and British Columbia* (1860), a book predating Mayne and Lord's publications.

The telling line in this "Journal" concerning the Saukaulutuch is ignored by Bancroft and Lord, and not examined by Mayne. And this is: "This tribe are known to the Nootkas, who have a superstitious idea that they are the spirits of their dead, on account of their speaking the same language."

Imagine wandering hunters unexpectedly encountering a similar group. Both spoke the Nootka or West Coast language, but the resulting confusion of such a face-to-face meeting in some rain-forest thicket would be tremendous. The mystery of such an encounter could only grow in the telling, and the surprise might live on for decades in village-memory.

As it was the Nootka were actively credulous when it came to the forest. Their mythology reflects an infinity of creatures living in the forest and sea and sky.

But it was the rain forest, which colours so much of Island mythology, that was hiding the greatest mysteries. There, a few more details, drawn from Nimpkish myths collected in the 1880s, are still accessible — pieces of flesh to be added to the skeletons of the ghost people.



Indian Camp, Vancouver Island, from Harper's New Monthly Magazine, 1870.

These myths make it clear that the headwaters of the Nimpkish River, an area encompassing Nimpkish and Woss lakes, were at once a supernatural centre and the homeland of various Nimpkish clans. It is said that this place is so far from the ocean, and the water so cold, salmon die there. While clearly this is a reference to the inland limits of the salmon spawning grounds, it is also a description that enhances the area's mystery.

Another possible factor contributing to the fabulous quality of this region is the distance between the southern end of Woss Lake and the northernmost point of Tahsis Inlet. Less than 14 kilometres separate the west coast people from the waterways of the Nimpkish. Tahsis River flows through more than half of this distance — a highway into the interior for people used to Island travel.

Unlike the HBC, who foresaw no financial benefits along the inland rivers, and the colonists, educated by the wild west literature of the day to fear the savage hordes lurking in the forests, the Nootka and Kwakiutl frontiersmen defied the terrors and moved about quite freely.

The last flitting glimpse of these hunters and travellers comes from Nimpkish geography. East of Nimpkish and Woss lakes, in an area theoretically controlled by the east coast people, there is a bend on the Oktwanch River known as Tribe Up River. Whether or not this is a reference to some encounter will never be known. There the silence is nearly total. The forest seldom reveals its secrets, so there they remain, haunting as water-music.

Charles Lillard is the author of Seven Shillings a Year, a history of Vancouver Island.

Caught in the Tide

By Boyce Richardson

SACRED FEATHERS
The Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) and the Mississauga Indians.

By Donald B. Smith. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1987. 372 pp., illus. $29.95.

In the two decades before the War of 1812, the Anishinabe people (or Mississaugas, as the whites called them), who lived along the north shore of Lake Ontario, came under tremendous pressures which they were ill-equipped to resist. For a few suits of clothes and a continuing supply of trade goods, they had surrendered the best land in Canada, and now were hanging on in the tiny parcels left to them, surrounded by thousands of foreigners, decimated by disease and liquor, and economically impoverished through the decline of the game on which they had always lived. Reduced from 1,000 in 1780 to something less than 300, they were divided between those who wanted to adopt the white man's beliefs and ways, and those, led by Chief Golden Eagle, who clung to the Indian ways.

The 1812 war increased those pressures, so to draw on the sources of his spiritual energy the old chief undertook a fast. Eventually (inevitably, one might say), he received a sign confirming his invincibility. He returned to camp and announced that he could prove the powers of the old way. He could catch a bullet in a tin kettle, he said, and, holding it before his face, he ordered a warrior to fire at him. Unfortunately, the powerful dreams that had cured the sick, predicted the weather, located the scarce game, were no longer enough. The bullet killed him on the spot.

Peter Jones.

This melancholy story, recounted in Donald Smith's comprehensive and interesting biography, *Sacred Feathers,* could stand as a metaphor for the entire experience of the Indians of Canada as they have tried to confront the invading Europeans since the seventeenth century.

The incident was possibly witnessed, Smith believes, by Sacred Feathers, a young man scarcely in his teens. And just as there was a symbolic quality to the death of Golden Eagle, so there proved to be to the life of Kahkewaquonaby, or Sacred Feathers, or Peter Jones, as he is better known to history.

He was one of two sons of a Mississauga woman, Tuhbenahneequay, and an American surveyor, Augustus Jones. Tuhbenahneequay had wanted the American to adopt an Indian style of life among the Ojibwa, but he had refused. Though devoted to her, he had instead married a Mohawk woman, and had gone off to farm at Stoney Creek near Burlington, leaving the two boys to be brought up by their mother as Indians.

He did not forget about his Ojibwa sons, however. He kept in touch, visited, obtained land grants for them, and in 1816, when Sacred Feathers was 14, and his brother 18, he decided the time had come for them to learn the ways of the Europeans. So he took them home with him and enrolled them in school, where they slept in beds with sheets instead of under a blanket on the floor, ate beef instead of country food, wore white man's clothes instead of breechclout and leggings and studied language and sums rather than hunting and trapping. After a year of schooling they were put to work on their father's farm.

Thus Sacred Feathers, who became Peter Jones, embodied in every aspect of his own life the dilemma of his people who, as their traditional ways were undermined, were expected to adopt those of the Europeans who now surrounded them. Peter Jones did so, wholeheartedly. He converted to Methodism, even became one of their performing fleas, as it were, complaining that he was "gazed upon as if I were some strange animal," during the repeated tours he made in England and the United States to raise money for his church.

Yet while working to convince Indians of their original sin, to inculcate in them a proper Christian sense of guilt (something foreign to their beliefs), Sacred Feathers was never totally swamped by Peter Jones: he remained an Indian and

worked ceaselessly in defence of the Ojibwa along the lake. He became their chief, their agent, and their main interpreter and liaison to the white power structure. In both roles he was foredoomed to failure, though he enjoyed for many years enormous success as a Christian leader, converting most of his tribe, turning them from liquor, settling them in neat villages, directing them into agriculture, guiding them into acceptance of the inevitability of emotional and spiritual surrender to the dominant society that had sprung up all around them.

As an Indian leader he recognized the importance of the land. In 1828 he attended the first council on Indian land rights, where the Ojibwa of southern Ontario put to government their view that they had never sold their lands, but had merely placed them in the hands of government for safekeeping. The government regarded this as Methodist-inspired agitation, and their response was to try to bribe the Jones brothers to foresake Methodism and embrace the Church of England.

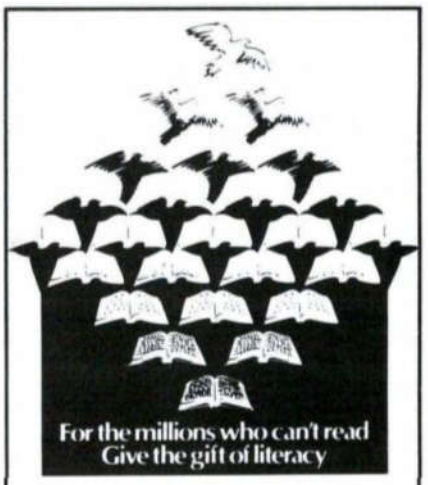
The fact was, no Indian leader could defend the land: the Europeans would occupy it, come what may. Ten years later Jones was sent by his people to Britain to petition — unsuccessfully — Queen Victoria for permanent land rights. In the 1840s he developed a four-point plan to secure full Indian participation in Canadian society: security of ownership to the reserves, ample amounts of arable farmland, access to good schools, and the same civil rights for Indians as those held by all others. These sensible recommendations were not granted. In fact, government moved in the opposite direction. In 1844 began the process of defining the conditions, formalized in the 1876 Indian Act, which have dominated relations between Europeans and Indians in Canada ever since, with disastrous results.

The effort to secure the last remaining fertile land in Ojibwa hands, the Saugeen, on Lake Huron, failed. And by the mid-forties, Jones told a Scottish audience: "... Our possessions are now so small that you would almost require a magnifying glass to see them. We are surrounded on all sides by white settlers, still encroaching on us, and I am afraid that in a few years we will hardly have space enough left to lay down our bones upon, or ground enough to cover our bodies." His prophecy was only too accurate: eventually even his own little band on the Credit River was forced out, and would have been disbanded had not the Six Nations agreed to take them in.

On the Christian side, too, Peter Jones suffered severe disappointments, though none severe enough ever to shake his faith. His very success as a Methodist preacher caused debilitating strains within Indian society, symbolized by some suicides, murders and factionalism, among his followers and antagonists. Though the church's accomplishments were many, by the early forties, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Mormons and three Methodist sects were in hot competition for Indian souls. Disappointed in his fight for land security, Jones concentrated his last years on education. But even here his achievements were temporary. The school into which he poured his last energies became after his death a European instrument of assimilation, hostile even to the use of Indian languages.

Told in this bald way, Jones's life sounds like a failure. But to say that is no more than to say that the Indians never had a chance of emerging victorious in their clash with the European invaders. They tried every possible stratagem, but none worked. They tried to adhere to the traditions (which Jones opposed), but the traditions crumbled, or failed (as for Golden Eagle). They tried political negotiations (with Jones as a major protagonist), but were usually betrayed, or treated with scarcely-veiled contempt by the white political establishment. They tried dropping out (Jones saved many of them from this melancholy fate) but were simply steamrolled out of the way. Finally, since they couldn't lick 'em, they tried to join 'em, but even within the church Peter Jones was treated as a second-class citizen, and it is an open question, largely unaddressed by Dr. Smith, whether in the end the church really helped the Indians resist, or aided in their cultural and spiritual decline.

Dr. Smith tells this pivotal story of early Ontario history with a great deal of devotion, an evident desire to do justice to the life of a remarkable man, and this is certainly not misplaced. In the process he does more than tell us about Peter Jones. He gives us a concise account of the process by which the Indians of southern Ontario lost their land, and of the stages of their decline. This is a period in the history of Canadian Indians that has not really been adequately dealt with. Dr. Smith's bibliography is extensive, but there are only a few general books, and they deal mostly with particular local groups. There is a multiplying number of scholarly papers and theses, but these are not easily accessible to the lay reader, so this book is very much to be welcomed.



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Dr. Smith has been at work for 10 years, has consulted documents and sources scattered through Canada, Britain and the United States, and one doubts that there is much more to be known about Peter Jones that he hasn't discovered.

Two final points: the book is essential reading for those wishing to keep in touch with contemporary developments, for on almost every page it sends echoes down into our own times. Jones's political program was, essentially, Indian self-government: and who can deny that our history would have been less sad, our present problems less intractable, if Indians had not been systematically stripped through the nineteenth century of every decision-making power?

Secondly, it is fascinating to realize that the religious story told by Dr. Smith is being repeated today, in almost uncanny detail, in various parts of the Canadian North. Just as the United States Methodists appeared in the reserves preaching hellfire and brimstone 170 years ago, so today United States Pentecostals preaching the same ferocious message have converted hundreds of Canadian Indians, weaning them away from the established churches, turning them from liquor, and imposing a rigid religious dogma on a tolerant and easy-going people. This, of course, is a matter of choice for the people involved. But it is salutary to realize that today's evangelists are working with a people whose spiritual, psychological and physical conditions in relation to the dominant society around them, are not greatly changed since the days of Peter Jones, in spite of the immense effort that is now being made.

Indeed, history has many lessons to teach us.

Boyce Richardson is an Ottawa freelance writer who has written extensively on the questions of native land claims and native rights.

Putting It On The Map

HISTORICAL ATLAS OF CANADA
From the Beginning to 1800

R. Cole Harris (Editor), Geoffrey J. Matthews (Cartographer/Designer). University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Buffalo, London, 1987. 198 pp., illus. $95.00.

By J.M. Bumsted

Although collective scholarship is not a new phenomenon in the writing of Canadian history, activity on a grand scale has not been common. Most Canadian history is written by individuals or small teams of scholars working on limited projects. Until this year, the principal contemporary exemplar of the success of the collective principle in Canadian historical scholarship, of that magical co-operation among large numbers of academics to produce work of great scope unthinkable for individuals or small groups to execute, has been the regular appearance of new volumes of the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. Now the *DCB* has been joined by a brash and attractively packaged newcomer, the *Historical Atlas of Canada*.

Like the *DCB*, the *Atlas* marks not only successful Canadian co-operation, but the expenditure of large sums of money in the form of academic grants. Both projects have been funded over the years by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRCC), the *Atlas* to the tune of something around $6,000,000. Without such major subventions, the research of many scholars could not have been mobilized, much less translated into final copy. Other nations are envious of Canada's willingness to commit such large sums of money to scholarship, and we will have at least two sets of volumes internationally much-praised on our bookshelves to mark the expenditure of the money on historical work.

And two sets of volumes is likely to be all that we will get, at least of work done at this level of cost and scope. SSHRCC has increasingly moved away from the funding of such large-scale projects, the Rolls Royces of scholarship, partly out of concern with escalating costs and partly under pressure to become more involved with the bicycles of scholarship, the small-scale research project. The *DCB* has only just managed a minimal commitment from SSHRCC to begin the work on the twentieth century volumes so necessary to complete the set, and one suspects that in the new political atmosphere in Ottawa these days, the *Atlas* would stand little chance were it to come forward today for funding. Or equally likely, it would be told that any money received from the public purse would have to be matched out of the private sector, the policy that is turning every cultural group to major fund-raising efforts, often to the detriment of the work to be supported.

Fortunately, the *Atlas* was proposed at a propitious moment, and it was funded. As a result we have an illustration of what public funding, intelligently spent, can achieve. We also have an excellent example of the work of one of the most distinctively Canadian of our academic disciplines: Historical Geography. In probably no other nation in the world do historical geographers play such a critical academic role as in Canada, for nowhere else do they contribute so extensively to mainstream historical study. The

historical period which the geographers particularly dominate, and where they have largely shaped its modern study, is the one encompassed by this first volume of the *Atlas*.

It is probably a tribute to the disdain in which the Canadian historical establishment holds the early period of Canadian history that it never really noticed that the people who had become both the experts and the scholars on the so-called "cutting edge" were no longer based in traditional history departments, but were increasingly turning up in departments of geography. Those few who did notice this phenomenon have tended to dismiss it as inconsequential, since historical geographers were really historians at heart anyway. Certainly the influence of the geographers on the early history of Canada has been substantial, and it is perhaps no accident that two of the three academics chosen to write on the years before 1840 in *The Illustrated History of Canada* are geographers by training.

The honour roll of first-rate scholarship by geographers on early Canada is a lengthy one. It should probably begin with the work of Andrew Hill Clark, including his well-known study *Acadia: The Geography of Early Nova Scotia to 1760*. From his academic base at the University of Wisconsin, Clark helped train the first generation of Canadian-based historical geographers, including Richard Colebrook Harris, James T. Lemon, and James R. Gibson. Major monographs by historical geographers on early Canada include Grant Head's *Eighteenth-Century Newfoundland: A Geographer's Perspective* (1976); Conrad Heidenreich's *Huronia: A History and Geography of the Huron Indians, 1600-1650* (1971); Harris's *The Seigneurial System in Early Canada: A Geographical Study* (1966); Graeme Wynn's *Timber Colony: A Historical Geography of Early Nineteenth Century New Brunswick* (1981); Arthur Ray's *Indians in the Fur Trade: Their Role as Hunters, Trappers, and Middlemen in the Lands Southwest of Hudson Bay* (1974); and Eric Ross's *Beyond the River and the Bay: Some Observations on the State of the Canadian Northwest in 1811 with a View to Providing the Intending Settler with an Intimate Knowledge of that Country* (1970). The study by Ross is regarded by many Canadian historians, including this reviewer, as the most successful imaginative reconstruction of the Canadian past ever attempted. Unfortunately, it has precious little competition. Such a list is by no means inclusive, but it does suggest the important revisionist work being done by the historial geographers. A useful survey of early Canada from this perspective is Cole Harris and John Warkentin, *Canada before Confederation: A Study in Historical Geography* (1974).

While on one level disciplinary territoriality was (and is) quite silly, those who examine this volume carefully may be in for more than a bit of a shock. We may all be historians under the skin, but historical geography does come at the study of history from a quite different perspective than that to which many readers of this journal are accustomed. As the *Atlas* so neatly demonstrates, the approach can be highly visual, but it is also extremely precise and in terms of methodology highly social scientific — both in its concern for measurement and in its tendency to search for generalization. Gone from this text are the anecdotes that one of our leading popular historians insists one of our leading historical geographers would not recognize if he stumbled over them. Gone are the stories and the rich humanistic fabric of the past. Historical geographers are not, for the most part, people-oriented. Instead we have maps and charts graphically illustrating the accumulation of quite precise data. A different mindset and approach on the part of the reader is going to be required to make sense of this material, however visually attractive it may appear at first glance. The maps will make little sense at initial perusal; they must be studied carefully and related to the accompanying text. Despite the visual content, the *Atlas* cannot be properly used by a quick turning of the pages. It will doubtless become a coffee table book in the homes of many Canadians, but if it is to become more than a status symbol for its owner, a good deal of attention must be given it.

At the same time, it ought to be emphasized that in no period of Canadian history does the cartographic approach make more sense and provide greater illumination than for the years before 1800. The careful study this volume requires will easily be repaid many times over. The *Atlas* is shown to its greatest advantage here, by providing a truly rewarding payoff for the effort required by the reader of this quite different approach to Canadian history. There is a direct if inverse correlation between the quality of contemporary verbal documentation and the value of cartography. Voyages of discovery and attempts at early settlement, for which evidence is scanty, work very well on maps and charts. The rich texture of later political, social, and cultural life in Canada is less amenable to the process. One suspects the succeeding two volumes will prove both harder going and less satisfyingly complete. One suspects also that demographic and economic data will receive a disproportionate amount of attention from the *Atlas* in volumes 2 and 3, since that sort of information translates well visually.

Volume I begins with forty-five pages on the "Prehistory" of Canada. The term "prehistory" is now regarded by some scholars as inadequate and misleading, sug-

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gesting as it does some sort of cultural hierarchy between the period before the arrival of the Europeans — who brought "history" with them — and the period after European intrusion. The problem here, of course, revolves around the limitations of the English language, which uses the same term — history — to refer both to the past and to the recording of the past. In any event, one gets no sense of these questions from the *Atlas*. Instead, the reader finds those maps and charts so ideally suited to presenting the findings of scholars on the early cultures of Canada, and readers will find more information graphically displayed in these forty-five pages than could be garnered easily by reading dozens of specialist studies.

The contributors put proper emphasis on the importance of climate changes for understanding the early development of native cultures, a point often neglected in older historical work that tended to assume both climates and cultures literally frozen in time. Their careful mapping of the findings of archaeologists, chiefly of tool and arrow points (wonderfully illustrated), synthesizes the work of hundreds of scholars through a series of plates (2-9). Whether we really needed quite so many pages of projectile points is another matter. Plate 14, on the patterns of early trade, is a particularly welcome one, illustrating as it does both the direction and extent of the trade routes. Plate 15, which locates major findings of cosmological (or religious) remains, ranging from British Columbia petroglyphs or rock etchings to prairie stone medicine wheels to rock paintings in northern Ontario, is equally invaluable.

The Norse voyages and settlements are illustrated on plate 16, and the major ecological regions of what is now Canada (as of 1500) are wonderfully charted on plate 17. Accompanying text details the soil, vegetation, fauna, and landforms of the major regions. In terms of material of this sort, one chart is worth a good many words. For many readers, the most rewarding plate in this section will be plate 18, dealing with population and subsistence patterns on the eve of European intrusion. A series of four maps allows us to visualize the twelve seventeenth-century linguistic families and to see the relative size of the major linguistic groups, as well as to appreciate the extent of various foodgathering strategies revealed both by archaeological and ethnohistorical evidence. In their wealth of detail and synthesis of modern scholarship that is for the non-expert relatively inaccessible and certainly tedious to read — since the academic disciplines involved have their own vocabularies and internal disagreements explicated mainly in specialist journals — the plates of this section are a veritable treasure trove of information and insight.

The next section deals with the Atlantic region from the arrival of the first fishermen to the establish-

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ment of settlement by the end of the eighteenth century. The fisheries (particularly in Newfoundland) receive a good deal of attention, reflecting the work historical geographers have done on the question, as well as the relative ease with which the information collected translates into cartographic, graphic, and pictorial form. Settlement and its developments are more difficult to reduce to these forms, although the reader will be struck with the ingenious ways in which material has been presented. Plate 30, on the Acadian deportation and return, works especially well. Plate 31, on pre-Loyalist Nova Scotia, includes an extremely useful map showing the ethnic origin, religion, and location of the major settlements in Nova Scotia based on the 1767 census. Unfortunately, constraints of space have meant that the Island of St. John has been included in this map, although its data (the source of which is unspecified) can scarcely be for 1767, the year that British settlement began. Curiously enough, in view of the attention given by Andrew Hill Clark to the Island of St. John (later Prince Edward Island), this province is throughout the section merely appended to other maps that clearly intend to concentrate elsewhere.

Far more than the section on prehistory, that on the Atlantic region suggests the strengths and limitations of the *Atlas* as a sourcebook for understanding the development of Canada. It must be emphasized that nowhere have the editors claimed definitiveness or all-inclusiveness, but there are plainly some matters that interest them more than others, some material that is more intractable than others. No attempt has been made, for example, to deal with political development, including the establishment of representative government or the complex and constantly changing administrative structure of the region within the British Empire. Indeed, imperial matters — including changing sovereignties, which contemporaries regarded as a most important feature of maps — are very much relegated to the background, mainly covered in two small maps stuck in another section on the bottom of plate 44, labelled "Indian War and American Invasion". Movements and locations of population, settlement patterns, and generalized economic dynamics are very much to the fore, here as elsewhere in the volume. And while the comment can hardly be meant as a criticism, the reader becomes increasingly aware of the fact that there are few individual people in this particular interpretation of Canadian historical development.

The section on "Inland Expansion" has a series of useful maps (plates 33 to 35) on native responses to European cultural contact in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These maps are considerably more illuminating than the plate dealing with French interior exploration, although there is an interesting table listing major French explorers and expeditions and including relevant tick-marks on a series of motivations for each one. Thus the Vérendryes are given as motivated by "Search for route to Orient and northern sea," "Territorial claims", and "Expansion of the fur trade", but not by "Missionary activities", "Military expeditions", "Search for minerals", or "Diplomatic missions". Such judgment calls are the inevitable result of the reduction of complex activity to tabular forms. Motivations are not the same as demographic data, and it is probably just as well that this volume contains very little of this sort of reductionist quantification. There are splendid plates dealing with French economic expansion in the interior, and a very good one dealing with the military activities of the Seven Years' War.

The next section is on the St. Lawrence settlements. It begins with a wonderful plate showing on maps of France the French origins of the Canadian population between 1608 and 1759. The next plate locates all parishes, missions, and Catholic institutions along the St. Lawrence Valley. Plate 51 displays the seigneuries of Canada, listing their original holders and those in possession in 1791. Perhaps the most ambitious and imaginative work in this section is in plates 55 and 56, which attempt to trace the geographical and structural peregrinations of house construction in Canada between 1600 and 1800. Here maps, house plans, and reconstructed drawings and elevations are integrated and employed to deal with cultural diffusion and change. Houses, of course, are a cultural artifact that have survived in fairly substantial numbers, and they have been a favourite focus of historical geographers seeking to deal with culture.

In a slight departure from the overall time-frame of the volume, the section on the Northwest extends beyond 1800, up to the 1821 date that has become regarded as pivotal in western development. As elsewhere in the work, however, the western plates get well beyond mere mapping of physical details, as the contributors seek to provide graphic and cartographic representation of other matters. Thus plate 57, for example, shows the diffusion of horses and the diffusion of firearms; plate 59 reproduces and explains several Indian maps of the early nineteenth century; and trading patterns for the eighteenth century

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are mapped at ten-year intervals on plate 60. A map of trading posts 1774-1821 (plate 62) and another of transportation routes in the Petit Nord (plate 63) are the sort of work more traditionally associated with geographers.

It should be clear by this point that any two-page plate contains an enormous amount of information, not solely in map form. Moreover, while there are distinct limitations to the coverage, the *Atlas* does include material well beyond the scope of traditional cartography. A closer look at plate 65 illustrates the complexity of the coverage. The title of the plate is "Peoples of the Boreal Forest and Parkland", and it deals with population in the west at the beginning of the nineteenth century. On these two pages are seven maps (all but one combining population data with geographic representation), and seven separate graphs (two bar graphs and five pie graphs), in addition to smaller graphs incorporated onto the maps themselves. The amount of information thus displayed on these two pages is really quite substantial, and understanding it requires more than a casual glance.

Plate 65 is listed as being by D. Wayne Moodie, Barry Kaye, Victor P. Lytwyn, and Arthur J. Ray. I call the reader's attention to this fact because in this essay I have up to this point failed to mention the names of the contributors to specific plates. This volume of the *Atlas* is a tribute to the work of R. Cole Harris and Geoffrey J. Matthews, listed on the title page of the volume as editor and cartographer/designer respectively. But it is also a tribute to those scholars who served on its editorial board, and especially to those scholars who contributed to the particular plates. Individual contributions tend to be forgotten in these collective enterprises; one seldom remembers that each biographical sketch in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* was researched and written by a particular scholar. One suspects that the contributors to the *Atlas* will receive even less recognition than those to the *DCB*. They deserve a rousing vote of thanks from all of us, for taking a good deal of time off from their own work to contribute semi-anonymously to this marvellous volume.

This volume deserves to be on the bookshelf of every Canadian who professes an interest in the history of this country. It is sufficiently physically attractive to go on coffee tables rather than bookshelves; I have removed my copy to the shelf largely because too many visitors were pawing it over when it was openly displayed. But it also needs to go into every classroom, not merely in its printed form but in the form of a series of photographic slides or transparencies that can be used to accompany lectures and discussions. I hope the University of Toronto Press does not challenge our attitudes toward copyright by failing to make such a slide series available soon, and at a legitimate price.

In summation, any Canadian who does not already own a copy of volume one of the *Atlas* had better rush out and get one before the print run is sold out if such is not already the case. This work is a major contribution to our understanding of early Canada, and a worthy exemplar of the work done in or influenced by the discipline of historical geography in this country. Readers should understand that certain forms of historical material, especially data with precise numbers and time-series, lend themselves best to such graphic presentation. But given this limitation, this volume is spectacularly successful.

J.M. Bumsted is the author of Land, Settlement and Politics of Eighteenth Century Prince Edward Island, published by McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987.

Middleton's Folly

By Hartwell Bowsfield

THE OTHER SIDE OF REBELLION
The Remarkable Story of Charles Bremner and his Furs

By Margaret R. Stobie. NeWest Press, Edmonton, 1986. 202 pp. $19.95 cloth, $9.95 paper.

In June 1885, Adolphe Caron, Minister of Militia and Defence, sent a telegram to Major-General Frederick Middleton, commander of the force charged with the suppression of the North West Rebellion, asking Middleton to bring back some "souvenirs" of the campaign for "Sir John, Sir Hector Langevin and myself". Middleton replied that the request would be difficult since "everyone in camp" was attempting to get souvenirs. He did, however, bring back ponies for his own and Caron's children, and the horse he had used in the campaign. He brought back also (and allowed others to obtain) furs that were the property of a Scottish half-breed and merchant, Charles Bremner. For five years Bremner had to wage a legal battle to obtain payment for his furs, and to clear his name of the charge that he had been a rebel. During that time he had become the subject of a political party debate in which Caron, Macdonald, Laurier, and Blake participated.

When first confronted by Bremner with the charge of confiscation, Middleton denied all knowledge of the matter, but in 1890 was forced to admit to a Select Committee of the House of Commons that he believed he had the authority to confiscate the furs. He thought, he said, that he had been "the ruling power" in the North West Territories and that, owing to the state of war, he "could do pretty much as he liked". The Committee concluded that Middleton had acted "under an unfortunate misconcep-

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Overland to Starvation Cove

WITH THE INUIT IN SEARCH OF FRANKLIN, 1878 – 1880

Heinrich Klutschak

Edited and translated by William Barr

Heinrich Klutschak, an artist and surveyor from Prague, was part of a group of Americans who in 1878 lived a season with the Inuit and then embarked on the longest sledge expedition ever undertaken. At Starvation Cove they stumbled on the grisly remains of the last survivors of Franklin's men. Klutschak's absorbing account of that expedition, accompanied by his remarkable illustrations, now appears in English for the first time.

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tion", and recommended that Bremner receive compensation. Middleton's presumption of authority had been bolstered by his belief that Bremner was a rebel. Had he not been found in Poundmaker's camp at the end of the rebellion? Had he not had in his possession a rifle believed to have been taken from a soldier killed in the engagement at Cut Knife Creek? These questions had led to Bremner's arrest, on Middleton's orders, and to a charge of treason-felony against him and four others. When it was found that the evidence against these men was inadequate they were released but were subject to future arrest and trial should substantial evidence be obtained. The charge was thus "not proven" — but their names were never cleared.

Taking advantage of the high land prices of the early 1880s, Charles Bremner had sold his land at Headingley, Manitoba, and with members of the Sayer and Taylor families settled on the north side of the Battle River, twenty-five miles west of Battleford, and across from Cree Chief Poundmaker's reserve. The new settlement became known as Bresaylor in honour of the three founding families. Here Bremner set himself up in a log store as a general merchant (bringing supplies in from Winnipeg), and engaged in farming and the fur trade. As the grievances of the Indians and *métis* in the territories turned to tension and rebellion, Bremner felt certain that Bresaylor, because it was a mixed-blood community, would be safe from Indian attack. Many in the community remembered the rebellion days at Red River in 1869-70. They had not been supporters of Riel at that time, did not welcome his appearance in the North West Territories, and were not numbered among the agitators in 1884-85. Bremner, however, miscalculated. Indians from Poundmaker's reserve sacked the settlement, seized the horses and cattle, broke into Bremner's store, and forced about fifteen families to return with them to the reserve. Bremner was one of this group, managing to bring into his "captivity" his carts loaded with furs. How he was able to retain his furs, what the nature of the "captivity" was, and why these settlers had not sought refuge, as so many others had, in Battleford, are questions not fully or satisfactorily explored in this story.

Bremner has received little attention in the history of the West and the rebellion. A peripheral statement of his case may be found in Desmond Morton's *Telegrams of the North-West Campaign 1885* published by the Champlain Society. Because there is no neatly-packaged archival collection of correspondence and diaries (Bremner was illiterate) reliance has been placed on the reminiscences of others (e.g. P. G. Laurie, Rev. Louis Cochin, Robert Jefferson), newspaper accounts, obituaries, and government reports. A full-scale biography and analysis is therefore difficult. His story might easily have been over-dramatized as the relentless struggle of the obscure, humble citizen confronting the great man, the military hero, in the glorious search for justice, but in a characteristically Canadian way Margaret Stobie has resisted the temptation to colour her narrative with the David vs. Goliath approach. The tone is always subdued. Whether consciously or not she presents a sample of the "new" history — the attempt to write history "from the bottom up", in which ordinary, average men rather than an elite, literate group and their place in the great events are at centre stage. In concentrating on the ordinary men the historian, it is said, avoids a bias that emerges from the use of the subjective written record left behind by the literate group. As the author points out, Bremner was an "ordinary" man "who did not create great events" but was "swept up in them". The value of her study is the use to which he is put as a representative or symbolic figure playing a minor role in the great drama of social and economic change in the Canadian West in the 1880s — the end of the age of the buffalo hunter, the resistance of the Indian to the reserve system, the life of pioneer families building new homes in the face of Indian and half-breed discontent. It is in the minor roles, according to the "new" historians, that the true, total, and substantive story of "great" events such as the rebellion of 1885 will be found.

Hartwell Bowsfield is Professor of History at York University, Downsview, Ontario.

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Read these and other fascinating articles and reviews in the June/July 1988 issue of **The Beaver.**

Trouble at the Archives

By Mark McNeil

Canada's National Archivist Jean-Pierre Wallot says he knows of no country in the world that keeps its written heritage in such adverse conditions. Canada's documentary past has been subjected to all kinds of abuse in recent years — floods, adverse temperature and humidity, insect and rodent infestation, and storage warehouses so ill-suited to protecting documents that Wallot says, "I wouldn't even put wheat in these buildings because it would rot."

"In the past few years I have visited many countries," says Wallot, "and as far as I know all the developed countries take care of their archives. We are probably the worst." Storage space is so limited that since March 1987 the National Archives in Ottawa has turned away more than 60 collections of documents including 200 boxes of files from the Progressive Conservative Party, 50 from the Liberals, 82 boxes from Deputy Prime Minister Don Mazankowski, and six boxes from Finance Minister Michael Wilson. All this material should have been handed over to the Archives as a matter of course.

"Since 1972 we have been out of space," says Wallot. "Each year we've added a warehouse here and a warehouse there. None of these have any environmental control for temperature or humidity. Sometimes not even physical control of the structure." Days go by when it seems not a single document is safe — as on 2 January 1988 when oily water from a machine room at the main Archives building oozed down over five metres of nineteenth century militia and 1930s External Affairs documents. It was the 102nd water leak — major or minor — in a year.

Archives employee Real Couture has been trying to save the documents damaged in the 2 January leak, but the water washed away the ink from many of the onion skin pages making many of the papers impossible to read.

While the militia correspondence had been previously microfilmed, the External Affairs papers — from between the two world wars — had not.

"We can't restore them," he says. "We can remove the water, but that is all we can do. The writing or print cannot be saved. We live with what we have left."

Even Canada's Constitution has received less than royal treatment over its five years of storage at the National Archives. There are two copies which are referred to by staff as the "stained" and the "rained". One document was rained on the day it was signed by Queen Elizabeth and the second copy — also signed by the Queen — later had red paint splattered on it at the Archives by a man protesting cruise missile testing. Archives staff tried to remove the paint, but the document is still noticeably stained.

Last summer the "rained on" copy was placed on public display at the main Archives building on Wellington Street — with an RCMP officer standing guard next to it. The air conditioning broke down one weekend and while sweat poured from the policeman's brow the Constitution curled in the humidity.

The Standing Committee on Communications and Culture recommended last month that a new facility should be constructed because of "unacceptable environmental conditions" that are accelerating the "process of deterioration of Canada's archival heritage and, in some cases, have threatened their survival."

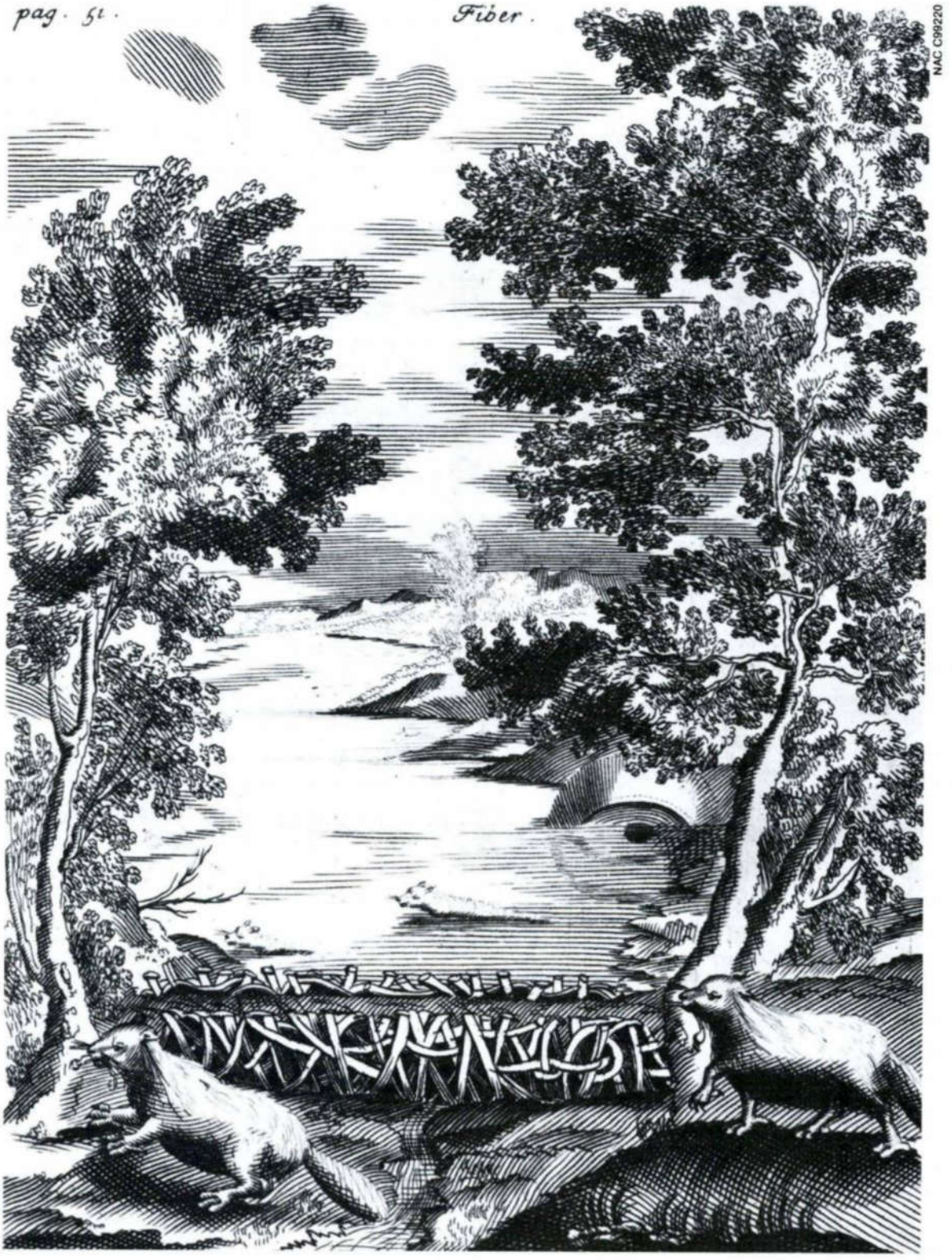
The cabinet has until May to respond to the report, although Communications Minister Flora MacDonald has said that a new home for the Archives is a priority of the government. Wallot and the standing committee believe the National Archives needs a short term solution — some dry storage space to store its records for the time being. For the long term it needs a new building that will cost more than $160 million.

"Everybody recognizes there is a problem," says Patricia Dumas, a spokesperson for MacDonald's office.

It is also the subject of concern in academic circles: "It's apparent to all users that an expanded facility is needed," says Carleton University historian and author Duncan McDowall, who praises Archives staff for being courteous and helpful while working under adverse circumstances. "It worries me as an historian. I'm worried about what is happening to the documents."

Part-time military historian Jerry Vernon of Vancouver — who comes to Ottawa three or four times a year to use the Archives — says "I'm really concerned about some of these

A seventeenth century treasure from the National Archives of Canada. Beavers Building a Dam, etching with line engraving.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Flora MacDonald.

buildings they're using. I've been out to some of them. And they're just concrete block houses with no temperature or humidity control . . . and what happens if there is a fire?"

Last year the National Archives received 98,000 research requests. Many requests come from professional researchers, academics, authors and insurance adjustors, but the overwhelming majority are people interested in tracing their roots. People like Linda Mehlfuhrer, of Hamilton, who is trying to find more about a distant relative who was Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia in the 1860s: "I'm thankful they keep all this stuff. But I think it is a disgrace to the whole country that the government doesn't provide enough funds for better housing of the documents."

For now the 787 employees of the Archives go about their jobs as best they can. At one Archives site, at the West Memorial building, 248 employees were sent home from work a dozen times last summer because inside temperatures exceeded 38° C. Unfortunately, the documents had to stay behind.

Mark McNeil is a reporter with the Hamilton Spectator.

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The Rupert's Land Research Centre will hold its 1988 Colloquium in Churchill, Manitoba, 27 June to 1 July 1988. Sessions will include papers and discussion on topics related to the history and geography of Rupert's Land and appropriate archival resources.

In addition to presentations and discussions, a number of activities are planned, including visits to Fort Prince of Wales, Sloop's Cove, Cape Merry and York Factory, and tours of Churchill museums and other points of interest.

For further information please contact:

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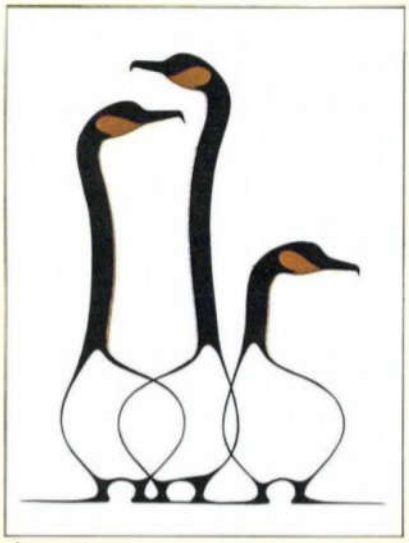

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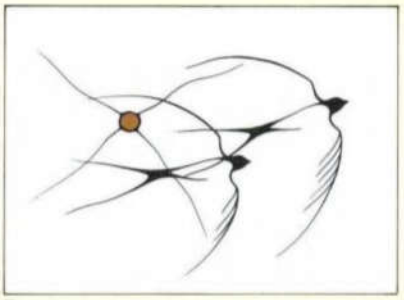

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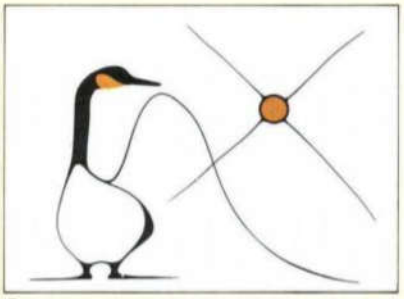

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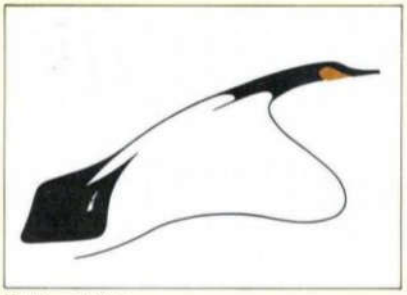
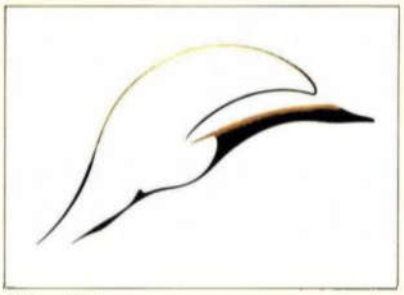


D Proud Male

E Mother & Child



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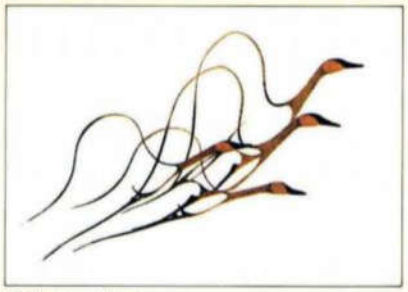

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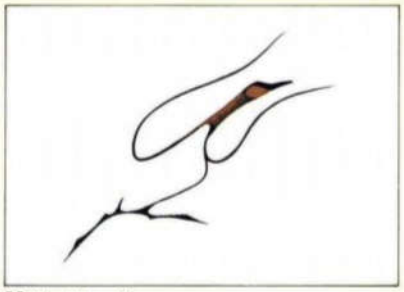

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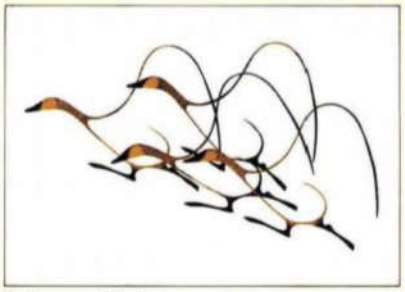

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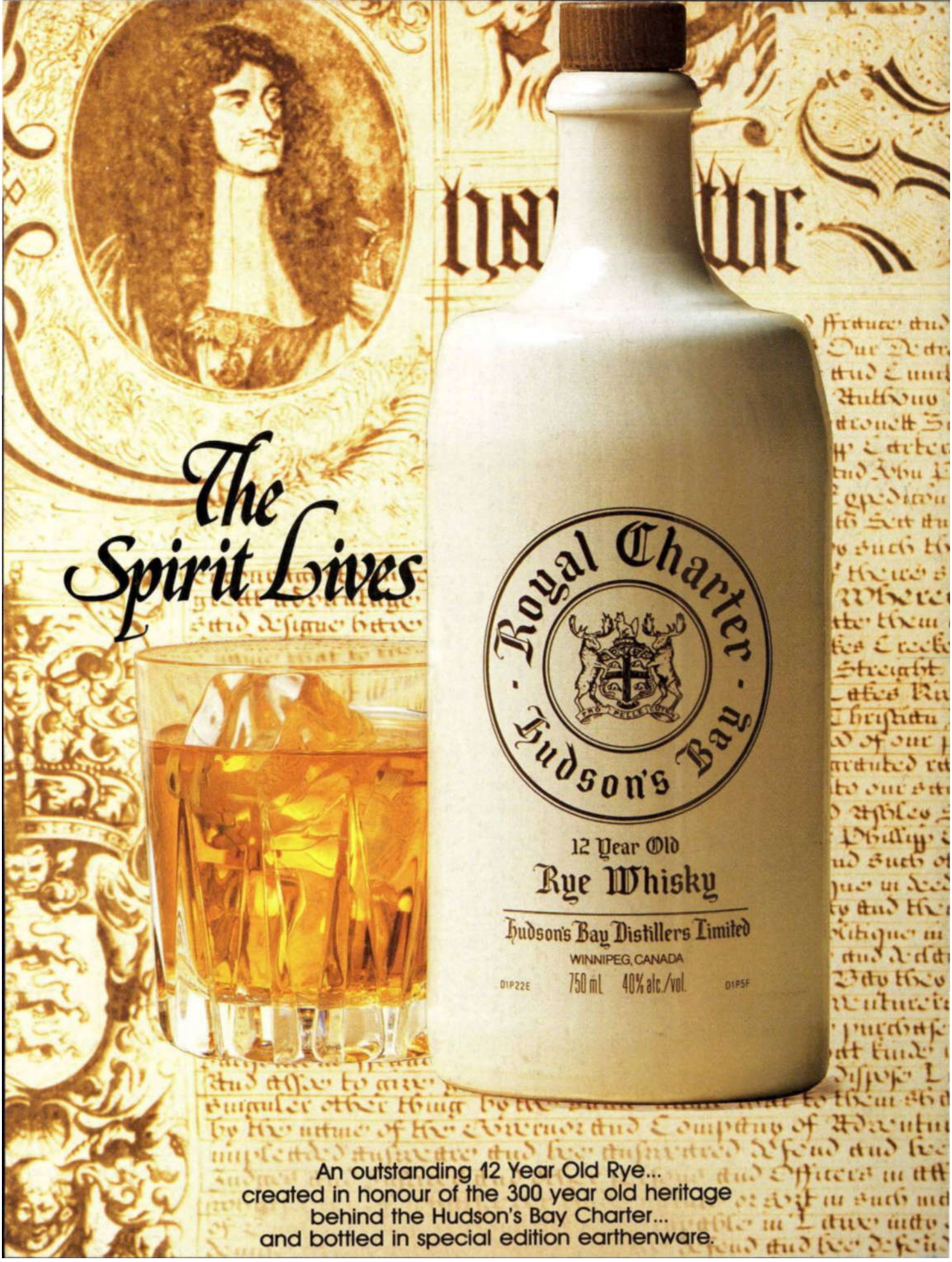

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